

ISRAEL'S PROPHETIC PUZZLE



Robert Leo Odom

“I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and, though he tarry, I will wait daily for his coming.”—No. 12 of *The Thirteen Principles of the Faith*.

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by **Robert Leo Odom**

ISRAELITE HERITAGE INSTITUTE
6840 Eastern Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20012

ABBREVIATIONS

- Antiq.* = Jewish *Antiquities*, by Josephus.
BT = *Babylonian Talmud*
B.C.E. = Before the Common Era (B.C. = Before Christ).
C.E. = The Common Era (= A.D. = Year of the Lord).
DGRB = *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography* by Wm. Smith.
HUP = Harvard University Press edition.
JT = *Jerusalem Talmud*.
LCL = Loeb Classical Library edition.
MTT = *Minor Tractates of the Talmud*.
R. = Rabbi.
JPS = Jewish Publication Society of America.

* * *

Unless otherwise indicated, the English translation of the Holy Scriptures quoted in this book is that of the Jewish Publication Society of America in 1917 (JPS).

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TO THE READER

This study on Messianic thought is an overview of the covenant relationship between God and His people from the time of Abraham to the time of the Prophets. The historical figure of David and the prophetic picture of the Messiah are compared. Individual statements about the Messiah in the writings of the Prophets lead into the heart of this work where detailed consideration is given to the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9.

Some useful rules for interpreting the symbolic elements in Daniel 8 and 9, especially their chronological statements, are provided as an aid in understanding them. Attention is focused upon the prophecy of Daniel 9. The work of the Messiah as described there is taken up in several sections of this study. The question of whether the Hebrew Scriptures refer to the coming of two Messiahs or a twofold work of one Messiah is examined.

Professor Odom has provided us with a clearly written and well researched and documented study on this important subject. We are very much in his debt for having brought this material together and presenting it to us in this form.

William H. Shea, Ph. D.
The Biblical Research Institute
Washington, D.C.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. . .The opening of Thy words giveth light.” Psalm 119:105, 130.

PREFACE

ISRAEL'S ancient canon of Holy Scriptures contains in one brief prophetic passage what a modern Jewish scholar has called "challenging and tantalizing figures." Throughout the centuries that mathematical puzzle has been studied by countless Hebrew and Gentile scholars. In our own time it is translated and read in almost 300 languages.

The Hebrew seer who penned it was Daniel. In his youth he was taken captive to Babylon by the army of Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C.E. This noble young man was of royal blood. He and other Hebrew youths were given three years of special training in "the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans" at the expense of that king. Daniel 1:1-6. The date of Daniel's death is not known, but the period of his public service in the Babylonian and Persian governments extended to the third regnal year of Cyrus the Great, king of Persia (536 B.C.E.), a period of nearly 70 years. Daniel 10:1. It is obvious that he was a very aged man when he died.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, served as a military commander in the rebellion of his country against Rome from 66 to 70 C.E. He personally witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple by the Romans at the end of that struggle. Concerning the Book of Daniel as it relates to Israel and Rome, he wrote this remarkable statement:

"Daniel also wrote about the empire of the Romans and that Jerusalem would be taken by them and the temple laid waste. All these things, as God revealed them to him, he left behind in his writings, so that those who read them and observe how they have come to pass must wonder at Daniel's having been so honoured by God."—*Jewish Antiquities*, book 10, chapter 11, section 7 (HUP vol. 6, p. 311). It is obvious that Josephus had in mind Daniel 9:26.

Daniel not only served as a high ranking statesman in two world empires—the Babylonian and the Persian—but also as a spokesman for God to rulers and citizens of all nations, including especially the people of Israel scattered throughout many lands from his time down to the present.

The purpose of our book is to show how *Israel's Prophetic Puzzle*, penned by Daniel 25 centuries ago, is still of special interest to his own people—Israel—and how history has recorded its accurate solution and fulfilment.

The Author



ANCIENT ISRAEL'S ROLE

BEHIND the approximately 15,000,000 Jews scattered throughout the nations of earth today there is a very interesting story spanning a period of nearly 4,000 years. An important part of it is Israel's role in the ancient world.

The ancestry of the Hebrew people began with a pious patriarch to whom God has referred as "Abraham My friend." Isaiah 41:8. This man, so highly esteemed by his Maker, was born nearly 2,000 years B. C. E., and died when he was 175 years old. Genesis 25:7,8. He is the first person known to have been designated as a "Hebrew." Genesis 14:13.

Abraham steadfastly resisted the mingling of heathenism with the true religion which his father and other kinsmen professed to represent. God Himself has borne witness to his fidelity to Him, saying: "Abraham hearkened to My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." Genesis 26:5. Thus he had a comprehensive knowledge of the doctrines and requirements of the true religion.

When Abraham was called out of Ur of Chaldea to settle in Canaan the Lord said to him: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and *be thou a blessing*. And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse; and *in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed*." Genesis 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18. This purpose was repeated by God to that patriarch's son Isaac and to his grandson Jacob. Genesis 26:4; 28:14.

Thus the Hebrew people were to be God's channel of blessing to the whole human race. The blessings showered upon Abraham and his descendants were not a boon to be hoarded and selfishly used solely for their own benefit. *God's plan in making the Hebrew people a great nation in ancient times was merely a part of His bigger plan for the entire world.*

When the Hebrew people were invited by the Lord to enter into a special covenant with Him at Mount Sinai, He told them what their mission was to be: "Ye shall be unto Me *a kingdom of priests*, and a holy nation." Exodus 19:6.

What was the mission of a priest? It was this: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for *he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.*" Malachi 2:7. As "a kingdom of priests," they were to be messengers of God to the rest of the world. That was their high and holy privilege. *Their mission was primarily a spiritual one.* Their Temple was to be "a house of prayer *for all peoples.*" Isaiah 56:6,7. See also 1 Kings 8:41-43; 2 Chronicles 6:32,33. Their political organization was to be only a means to this end.

The little land of Palestine was geographically a very strategic place, because it was a corridor walled in by the Mediterranean Sea on the west and by the vast, barren desert on the east. To the north was Assyria with her vassal nations, while to the south lay Egypt and the peoples subjected by her. Between these great powers there were commerce, diplomatic relations, and military campaigns.

The little nation of Israel, occupying the land of Canaan, was thus a nexus or link between the great heathen regions of antiquity. Its area was about 10,000 square miles, only slightly larger than the little State of Vermont (9,600 sq. mi.) in the United States of America. Its geographical location in Canaan afforded the Hebrew people many opportunities to witness for God and bring blessing to the other peoples of earth. Here is a divinely inspired pen picture of what the Lord intended Israel to be:

“In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, *a blessing in the midst of the earth*; for that the Lord of hosts hath blessed him [Israel], saying: ‘Blessed be Egypt My people and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance.’ ” Isaiah 19:23-25.

Such was Israel’s mission in the ancient world. After Assyria rose Babylon, then Medo-Persia, followed by Greece, and after that Rome. But the strategic position of Israel in the geography of the ancient world remained unchanged, for Palestine was the center around which civilization revolved for many centuries. In various ways it was the crossroads of the world for fifteen centuries.

Israel reached her geographical zenith during the reigns of David and Solomon, when her borders extended from Egypt to the river Euphrates. The psalmist has left us this picturesque description of her material prosperity:

“Thou [God] didst pluck up a vine out of Egypt; Thou didst drive out the nations, and didst plant it. Thou didst clear a place before it, and it took deep root, and filled the land.” Psalm 80:9.

Isaiah later presented this saddening picture of Israel as the Lord’s vineyard:

“My well-beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill; and he digged it, and cleared it of stones, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a vat therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? . . . *For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the*

house of Israel, and the men of Judah the plant of His delight.” Isaiah 5:1-7.

As we read the story of Israel in Holy Writ we must admit, however much we may lament the fact, that she was not always faithful to her trust and at times failed to carry out her God-given mission to the rest of the world. Nevertheless, when the majority forsook the Lord and followed Baal or went astray in other ways, there was ever a faithful remnant (minority) who stood unflinchingly true to God and witnessed for Him. As we read the writings of the prophets, we find that they penned messages of warning, reproof, mercy, and hope for many other people as well as for Israel.

Joseph’s piety and unselfish life in Egypt brought great blessings to that nation. Jonah’s labors in Nineveh, capital of Assyria, led many to repent in sackcloth and ashes. Daniel and his three companions, by their integrity and allegiance to God during the Babylonian Captivity led Nebuchadnezzar and Darius the Mede to publish decrees in many languages to tell the world what a good and wonderful God those men served. By means of Esther and Mordecai, Persia learned to know much about the God of Israel. Cyrus the Great, Darius Hystaspes, and Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) issued decrees that exalted the name of God and helped His people Israel.

We would do well to review more often than we do the story of Israel in ancient times, in the light of the fact that the God-given mission of the Hebrew people was that of being a channel of blessing to all the nations of earth. To what extent was that mission fulfilled, and to what degree was the Lord able to use Israel as His instrumentality for that purpose? In seeking the answers to these questions we may be spurred individually to fulfill God’s purpose for us in the modern world.

THE MESSIANIC HOPE

SOMETIME, somewhere, and somehow in the far distant past the Messianic hope took root in pious human hearts, and by such it has been cherished ever since. The vicissitudes of millenniums have not uprooted it; the flowing and ebbing of the tides of prosperity and poverty have not obliterated it; and the harrowing cruelties endured by Jews during the centuries have not torn it entirely from their breasts. It still pulsates in myriads of Israelite hearts as their lips echo, in many languages and in many lands, these words which climax the well-known statement of "The Thirteen Principles of the Faith," drafted by Maimonides (1135-1202 C.E.):¹

"I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and, though He tarry, I will wait daily for His coming."

For many decades we have been informed that the Thirteen Articles of the Faith "have been accepted by the great majority of Jews and are found in the old prayer-books."²

However, in recent times this does not appear in prayer books used in some Jewish religious circles. When and how did that elimination take place? We are told that David Einhorn (1809-1879), a German rabbi and theological writer, was a leader of the Reform movement in America. He reduced the Articles of Faith to five, and in doing so eliminated the one concerning the Messiah.³ Also: "The authors of the American prayer-books were extremely radical in the abridgment of the Hebrew text and in eliminating all references to a personal Messiah."⁴

This poses for us this question: Whom shall we follow, the skepticism of some modern scholars, or the "Thus saith the Lord" of Israel's ancient prophets?

“Though the name is of later origin, the idea of a personal Messiah runs through the Old Testament. It is the natural outcome of the prophetic future hope.”

The word “messiah” is simply an English transliteration of the old Hebrew term *mashiach*, meaning “anointed” (as an adjective) or “anointed one” (as a noun). It has passed down to us in Aramaic as *meshicha*, and later into Greek and Latin as *messias*. However, the real Greek equivalent for *mashiach* has ever been *christos*, which also means “anointed” or “anointed one.” When the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek by Jewish scholars during the third and second centuries B.C.E., they consistently employed *christos* as the correct Greek equivalent in all but two of the thirty-nine instances in which *mashiach* appears in the Hebrew text. In the two exceptional instances a participle of the Greek verb *chriō* (“to anoint”) was used.

Thus the Greek word *christos*, which has been transliterated into English as “christ,” was not coined by Jesus of Nazareth or any of his followers. It is of ancient Greek origin and was commonly used by Greek-speaking Jews throughout the world long before the commencement of the Common Era, for they had it in the Holy Scriptures in the Greek language, called the Septuagint (LXX).

Mashiach (“anointed” or “anointed one”) is found 39 times, and the corresponding verb *mashach* (“to anoint”) appears 69 times, in the Hebrew text of our Bible. In fact, *mashiach* occurs four times, and *mashach* 28 times, in the Torah alone. *Mashach* first appears in Genesis 31:13, and *mashiach* is found first in Leviticus 4:3, 5, 16. Thus *mashiach* has been used by Hebrew-speaking people for about 3,500 years.

To the faithful in Israel the Messiah has been a person, and they expect that when He comes to reign as king then will begin the messianic era. Though some people suppose the Messiah is a future utopian age, they find it hard to explain how such

a period can be ushered into this troubled world without some outstanding person leading it. The history of the Messianic hope among the Hebrew people since ancient times clearly shows that they generally believed and taught that the Messianic age will begin at the coming of the Messiah as a person. The following statements in currently published Jewish prayer books, show that this concept of the Messiah is still precious to many Hebrew hearts:

“May the All-merciful make us worthy of the days of the Messiah, and of the life of the world to come.”

“May He open our hearts unto His law, and place His love and fear within our hearts, that we may be worthy to live to witness and inherit happiness and blessing in the days of the Messiah and in the life of the world to come.”

Those supplications, plus many more that could be cited, mean that the Messianic hope among Jews is not dead.

When did that hope first take root in the heart of man?

The Messianic hope is as old as is the problem of sin in the world. Very soon after our first parents adopted the philosophy that experience in wrongdoing, in addition to right-doing, is essential to human progress (Genesis 2:16,17; 3:1-6), the Lord made this astonishing announcement to the Adversary in their hearing:

“I will put enmity between thee [the tempter] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Genesis 3:15, Alexander Harkavy’s translation.

Thus our Creator Himself then foretold that in the future there would be born among men a person who would crush the head—or author—of evil in this world and thereby put an end to the reign of wickedness upon the earth.

That prophetic promise of Genesis 3:15 was the planting of the Messianic hope in the human heart, and it has been cherished ever since by those who have loved and obeyed God’s Word. That prophecy assured men that somebody would

appear among them in the future to deliver the world from the power of the Adversary. It did not then give the deliverer's name, or indicate the place where he would be born, or tell what his race or nationality would be, or give the date when he would crush the head of the evil one.

The *Targum of Palestine* (commonly known as the Targum of Jonathan B. Uzziel) to the Book of Genesis shows that Genesis 3:15 was anciently interpreted by Jewish teachers to mean that "a remedy" for the wound that sin has caused will be provided "in the days of the King Meshiha." The *Targum of Jerusalem* interpreted that prophecy as teaching the same thing.

Genesis 4:1 states that when Eve bore her first son (Cain), she said: "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." The *Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis comments that she hinted at "that seed which would rise from another source, viz. the King Messiah."⁶

And when Eve bore Seth after the death of Abel, she said: "God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel." Genesis 4:25. The *Midrash Rabbah* on Ruth contains this comment: "It is written *For God hath appointed me another seed* (Gen. iv, 25), that is, seed from another place, referring to the Messiah."⁷

"It is not written 'son,' but '*seed*'; that seed which comes from another place. Who is thus referred to? The Messiah."⁸ Editorial footnote No. 2 comments: "The Messiah of the House of David."⁸

Those Midrashic statements show that Jewish interpreters of long ago understood that the promised "seed of the woman" would be the Messiah, who would be born among men at some future time. During the centuries which followed the Lord revealed to men more and more concerning that plan.

After the Flood, Noah uttered a striking prophecy which focused the attention of mankind on his son Shem and his

descendants as the race through which God's promise of special blessing for the world would come. Genesis 9:18, 19, 25-27.

Later, to Abraham, a descendant of Shem, the Lord gave this promise: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Genesis 22:18; 18:18. The Lord repeated that promise to Isaac and to Jacob, the father of the tribes of Israel. Genesis 26:4; 28:14.

Thus the prophetic spotlight was, from Abraham's time onward, focused on the Hebrews as the people through whom God's special blessing should come *for all mankind*. When the time drew near for Jacob to die he was inspired to utter a remarkable prophecy concerning his son Judah and his offspring: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet; until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Genesis 49:10, Isaac Leeser's translation.

This prophecy pointed out the tribe of Judah as the one from which Shiloh—the peace giver—would come. As might be expected, the Babylonian Talmud could not ignore that wonderful prophecy uttered by Jacob. It reports this rabbinical question and answer concerning the Messiah:

"What is his [the Messiah's] name?—The School of R. Shila said: His name is Shiloh, for it is written, *until Shiloh come* (Genesis XLIX, 10)."⁹

The Midrash Rabbah on Lamentations says also: "The school of R. Shila said: The Messiah's name is 'Shiloh,' as it is stated, *Until Shiloh come* (Genesis XLIX, 10), where the word is spelt *Shlh*."¹⁰

The Midrash Rabbah on Genesis says: "THE SCEPTER [STAFF] SHALL NOT DEPART FROM JUDAH alludes to the Messiah, son of David," etc.¹¹

And again we read: "UNTIL SHILOH COME. This indicates that all the nations of the world will bring a gift to Messiah the son of David," etc.¹²

Again: "UNTIL SHILOH COMETH: This alludes to the royal Messiah."¹³

Also: "This alludes to the Messiah the Son of David," etc.¹⁴

The *Targum of Jerusalem* interprets Genesis 49:10 as follows: "Kings shall not cease from the house of Yehudah [Judah], nor sapherim teaching the law from his children's children, until the time that the King Meshiha [Messiah] shall come, whose is the kingdom, and to whom all the kingdoms of the earth shall be obedient. How beauteous is the King Meshiha [Messiah], who is to arise from the house of Yehudah [Judah]!"

The *Targum of Onkelos* interprets Genesis 49:10 in this way: "He who exerciseth dominion shall not pass away from the house of Yehuda [Judah], nor the saphra from his children's children for ever, until the Meshiha [Messiah] come, whose is the kingdom, and unto whom shall be the obedience of the nations (*or*, whom the peoples shall obey)."

In *The Midrash Rabbah* on Numbers it is said: "The tribe of Judah—the wise and the great among them—possessed a tradition from our father Jacob as to all that would befall the whole tribe until the days of the Messiah. Every one of the tribes similarly possessed such traditions from their father Jacob as to what would happen to them until the days of the Messiah."¹⁵

Balaam, under the inspiration of God, uttered a remarkable prophecy concerning Israel: "There shall step forth a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel," etc. Numbers 24:17-19.

The *Targum of Palestine* to that prophecy reads: "Their king will arise from among their children, and their redeemer will be of them and among them; and he will gather their captives from the cities of their adversaries, and their children shall have rule among the peoples. And the kingdom of the King Meshiha [Messiah] shall be made great."

The *Targum of Onkelos* gives this: "When a king shall arise out of Jakob, and the Meshiha [Messiah] be anointed from Israel, he will slay the princes of Moab, and reign over all the children of men."

Thus the prophecy of Balaam has been interpreted by Jews to refer to the promised Messiah.

Later (in the 11th century B.C.E.), the pious Hannah, mother of the prophet Samuel, was inspired to say in prayer: "The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; and He will give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed." 1 Samuel 2:10. The Hebrew word rendered as "anointed" here is *mashiach* (messiah). That prophecy was uttered before the birth of Samuel and, therefore, years before Saul was made king of Israel. That is, this prophecy spoke of God's "king" and "His anointed" (Messiah) long *before* Israel had a king.

The *Midrash Rabbah* on Lamentations comments on Hannah's prophecy as follows: "When will He [God] restore them [Israel] to their place? When the Holy One, blessed be He, raises aloft the horn of His Messiah, as it is written, '*And He will give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed.*'"¹⁶

It states also: "'There are some who add the horn of the Messiah,' as it is written, *And He will give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed* (1 Sam. II, 10)."¹⁷

The Midrash on Psalms says: "The horn of the King Messiah in Kingship, as is said *The Lord . . . will exalt the horn of His anointed* (1 Sam. 2:10)."¹⁸

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, p. 151, art. "Articles of Faith;" Vol. 9, p. 73, art. "Moses ben Maimon."
2. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 151.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 152; vol. 5, p. 78, art. "Einhorn, David."
4. *Ibid.*, vol. 10, p. 180, col. 1, art. "Prayer-Books."
5. *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 506, art. "Messiah."

6. *The Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis, chap. 23, sect. 5, vol. 1, p. 196, Soncino ed.
7. *Ibid.*, on Ruth, chap. 8, sect. 1, p. 93, Soncino ed.
8. *Ibid.*, chap. 7, sect. 15, p. 91.
9. BT Sanhedrin 98b, p. 667 Soncino ed.
10. *The Midrash Rabbah* on Lamentations, chap. 1, sect. 51, p. 137 Soncino ed.
11. *Ibid.*, on Genesis, chap. 97. Vol. 2, p. 906, Soncino ed.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 906, 907.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 956.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 906.
15. *Ibid.*, on Numbers, chap. 13, sect. 14, vol. 2, p. 527.
16. *Ibid.*, on Lamentations, chap. 2, sect. 3, part 6, p. 169. Soncino ed.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 168, 169.
18. *The Midrash on Psalms*, Ps. 75, vol. 2, p. 12.



MESSIAH, SON OF DAVID (1)

AN EARNEST petition presented to God by many devout Jews on the Day of Atonement is this: "Speedily cause the *offspring of David*, Thy servant, to flourish, and let his horn be exalted by Thy salvation," etc. That statement from the Prayer-Book is offered also in morning services throughout the year.

At New Moon and on intermediate days of Passover and Tabernacles the following petition is uttered by pious Jewish lips: "Our God and God of our fathers! May our remembrance rise and come and be accepted before Thee, with the remembrance of our fathers, of *Messiah the son of David Thy servant*," etc.

The Babylonian Talmud of long ago likewise speaks of "the Messiah, the son of David." Also: "The Messiah, the son of David (May he reveal himself speedily in our days)," etc.² It is often stated there that the "son of David will come."³ In fact, the phrase "the son of David" is repeatedly used in Jewish literature in reference to the Messiah.⁴

Thus in the distant past the belief took root in the minds of devout Jews that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David, who reigned over Israel nearly thirty centuries ago (1011-971 B.C.E.).

How the Messianic hope became centered on a descendant of King David is told in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17. King David wished to build a temple—as the fixed center of worship of God in Israel—to take the place of the portable tabernacle which had served the purpose since the second year of Israel's departure from Egypt. But the Lord sent, by Nathan the prophet, a message to King David in which He commended

the monarch's devotion and good intentions. However, because the king had been a man of war, and had shed much blood, he was told that he should not build such a house. 1Chronicles 22:8-10. But with the message restraining the king, the Lord conferred upon David the high honor promised in this prophecy: "The Lord will make thee a house. When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.... And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever before thee; thy throne shall be established forever." 2 Samuel 7:11-16. See also 1 Chronicles 17:10-14.

That promise foretold the building of *two* houses: (1) one (the Temple) for the Lord, and (2) one for David. Concerning the one for David, it was said: "The Lord will make thee a house" (2 Samuel 7:11); or, "The Lord will build thee a house" (1 Chronicles 17:10). The "house" which the Lord planned for David would be, obviously, a dynasty that would never end, for He said: "Thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever before thee; thy throne shall be established forever." 2 Samuel 7:16. Furthermore, David would not see that prophetic promise completely fulfilled in his lifetime for the Lord had said that it would be realized "*when thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers,*" etc. Verses 12, 13; 1 Chronicles 17:11,12.

However, David lived to see his son Solomon become his successor as ruler of Israel, and God's promise was partially fulfilled through Solomon. David turned over, in writing, to his son the plans which the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, had revealed to him for the building of the first Temple. 1 Chronicles 28:11-19. In doing so, David referred to that prophetic promise which the Lord had given him. Verses 2-6. As he pondered its significance, David was well aware of the fact that its ultimate fulfilment would be realized in the far distant

future. In his prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord he said: "Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house *for a great while to come.*" 2 Samuel 7:19; 1 Chronicles 17:17.

Psalm 89 has as its main theme the Lord's prophetic promise to David. For example, in it God says: "I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant: for ever will I establish thy seed, and build up thy throne to all generations." Verses 4, 5.

Again, the Lord says in the same psalm: "My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with him; and through My name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also on the sea, and his right hand on the rivers." Verses 25, 26. In comment, the following question and answer are given in *The Midrash Rabbah* on Numbers: "How do we know the same of the King Messiah? Because it is written, *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth* (Ps. LXXII, 8)."⁵

The Lord says also in Psalm 89: "I also will appoint him firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. For ever will I keep for him My mercy, and My covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven." Verses 28-30.

The Midrash Rabbah on Exodus comments that God had said that as He had made Jacob and Israel His firstborn, "so will I make the King Messiah firstborn, as it says: *I will also appoint him firstborn* (Psalm LXXXIX, 28)."⁶

Again, in that psalm we read: "Once have I sworn by My holiness: Surely I will not be false unto David; his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me." Verses 36, 37. *The Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis comments thus: "Of the Messiah it is written, *And his throne [shall endure] as the sun before Me* (Psalm LXXXIX, 37)."⁷

And in verse 52 it is said concerning God's enemies: They "have taunted the footsteps of Thine anointed." The Hebrew word rendered here as "anointed" is *mashiach*, that is,

“Messiah.” Likewise *The Midrash Rabbah* on the Song of Songs, applies that statement to the Messiah.⁸

In another psalm we find this earnest petition to God: “For Thy servant David’s sake turn not away the face of Thine anointed.” Psalm 132:10. And the Lord said concerning Mount Zion: “There will I make a horn to shoot up unto David, there have I ordered a lamp for Mine anointed.” Verse 17. In both verses the Hebrew word translated as “anointed” is *mashiach* (“Anointed One,” or “Messiah”). *The Midrash Rabbah* on Leviticus comments that the prophet speaks of being worthy “to welcome the lamp of the King Messiah. What is his reason? Because it says, *There will I make a horn to shoot up unto David, there have I ordered a lamp for Mine anointed* (Psalm CXXXII, 17).”⁹

The promise that the Lord would secure David’s kingdom to one of his male descendants, and that the throne of that anointed one would be established forever, has not yet been *wholly* fulfilled. The God of Israel, by the mouth of His prophets during the centuries subsequent to King David’s death, made it very clear that in their day the realization of the Messianic hope was still future.

Isaiah’s prophetic ministry extended from the year of King Uzziah’s death (about 739 B.C.E.) until the close of King Hezekiah’s reign. In fact, Talmudic tradition holds that Isaiah was slain by King Manasseh soon after his reign began (approximately 686 B.C.E.). Thus the ministry of Isaiah, one of Israel’s greatest prophets, spanned half a century or more. From the end of King David’s reign (about 971 B.C.E.) to the commencement of Isaiah’s prophetic ministry (about 739 B.C.E.) was an interval of about 230 years. This should be kept in mind, for it lends meaning to the Messianic prophecies uttered by Isaiah.¹⁰

This prediction in Isaiah 4:2 refers to the future: “In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them

that are escaped of Israel.” Harkavy’s translation. The Hebrew word *tsemach* rendered as “branch” in this translation is given as “sprout” in that by Isaac Leeser, and as “growth” in that of the Jewish Publication Society of America.

The ancient Targum to Isaiah explains that prophecy thus: “At that time shall the Anointed one (or, *Messiah*) of the Lord be for joy and for glory, and they that keep the law for majesty and for praise for them that are escaped of Israel.”

To King Ahaz and others of the house of David (Isaiah 7:1, 2, 10-12) this statement was addressed: “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: behold, the young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Verse 14. Leeser’s rendering says that “this young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and she shall call his name Immanuel, (God with us).”

That Jewish teachers long ago considered this prophecy a reference to the Messiah is obvious from this brief comment: “Ahaz: *Ask thee a sign* (Isa. VII, 11). The King Messiah: *Ask of me*, etc. (Ps. II, 8).”¹¹

Another prophecy concerning Israel’s future is this one from Isaiah’s pen: “For a child is born unto us, a son hath been given unto us, and the government is placed on his shoulders; and his name is called, Wonderful, counsellor of the mighty God, of the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, for (promoting) the increase of the government, and for peace without end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it and to support it through justice and righteousness, from henceforth and unto eternity: the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.” Isaiah 9:5, 6, Leeser’s translation.

Alexander Harkavy’s version reads: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor of the Mighty God, of the Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, and upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

The Targum to Isaiah comments: “The prophet saith to the house of David, A child has been born to us, a son has been given to us: and he has taken the law upon himself to keep it, and his name has been called from of old, Wonderful counsellor, Mighty God, He who lives for ever, the Anointed one (or, *Messiah*), in whose days peace shall increase upon us. Great shall be the splendour of them that observe the law, and of them that preserve peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to build it in judgment and in righteousness from henceforth and for ever: by the Memra of the Lord of host shall this be wrought.”

This is the explanation given to the people of Israel: “He said to him: ‘I have yet to raise up the Messiah,’ of whom it is written, *For a child is born to us* (Isa. IX, 5).”¹²

The Jewish Encyclopedia appropriately remarks that in Isaiah 9:5, 6 we have “a detailed picture of the future ideal king”¹³ in the Messianic hope of Israel. The last part of that prophecy clearly shows that the fulfillment of the Messianic promise made by God to David more than two hundred years before was still future in Isaiah’s time. This means that not one of David’s descendants who had sat upon the throne was the divinely promised Messiah (Anointed One) who would sit on David’s throne and reign *forever*, and whose kingdom would have no end.

The Lord endeavored to make clear to His people what He meant by the Messianic promise, for He said: “There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a twig shall grow forth out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the

Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.” Isaiah 11:1,2. The verses which follow foretell that the royal Messiah will judge and decide with equity in his dealings with men, and that he will destroy the wicked and bring peace to this turbulent world. This is what the Sacred Scriptures have foretold.

The Targum to Isaiah explains that prophecy thus: “And a king shall come forth from the sons of Jesse, and an Anointed One (or, *Messiah*) from his sons’ sons shall grow up.” And verse 6 is interpreted by the same Targum in these words: “In the days of the Anointed One (or, *Messiah*) of Israel peace shall be multiplied in the land.”

The tractate *Sanhedrin* in the Babylonian Talmud specifically identifies him who was to come forth as a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, saying: “The Messiah—as it is written [quoting Isaiah 11:2f.].”¹⁴

The *Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis declares concerning the expression “Spirit of God” in Genesis 1:2 that “this alludes to the Spirit of Messiah, as you read, *And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him* (Isa. XI, 2).”¹⁵

Again the same work comments: “Of the royal Messiah it is written [quoting Isaiah 11:2].”¹⁶

The *Midrash Rabbah* on Numbers also identifies the scion of Jesse as “The Messiah,” and likewise cites Isaiah 11:2 as referring to him.¹⁷ Both the *Midrash Rabbah* on Ruth and the same on Lamentations do this also.¹⁸

In verse 10 of that same prophecy of Isaiah 11 this is said: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his restingplace shall be glorious.”

The prediction that “unto him shall the nations seek” brings to mind the prophecy of Genesis 49:10, in which it was foretold that Shiloh (Peace-giver) would spring from Judah, and that “unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” Leeser’s translation.

The Targum to Isaiah 11:10 explains that "it shall come to pass at that time, that the son of the son of Jesse, who is about to arise as a sign to the peoples, to him shall the kingdoms be subject; and his dwellingplace shall be glorious."

The *Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis says that "the royal Messiah will be descended from the tribe of Judah, as it says [quoting Isaiah 11:10]."¹⁹

The Midrash on Psalms, in comment on Psalm 21:1, explains: "These words are to be read in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere: *In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the peoples; and unto him shall the nations seek* (Isa. 11:10)—that is, seek the king Messiah, David's son, who will remain hidden until the time of redemption."²⁰

In Isaiah 16:5 we read: "And a throne is established through mercy, and there sitteth thereon in truth, in the tent of David, one that judgeth, and seeketh justice, and is ready in righteousness."

The comment of the Targum to Isaiah 16:1 is this: "They shall bring tribute to the Anointed One (or, *Messiah*) of Israel, who has prevailed over him who was as a wilderness, to the mount of the congregation of Zion." Also 16:5: "Then the throne of the Anointed One (or, *Messiah*) of Israel shall be established in goodness, and he shall sit upon it in truth, in the city of David, as a judge, and seeking judgment, and executing truth."

The Midrash on Psalms, in comment on Psalm 110:4, says: "To the Messiah also it will be said *And in mercy shall the throne be established*: and he shall sit to it in truth, in the tent of David, judging (Isa. 16:5)."²¹

In Isaiah 41:27 the Lord said to Israel: "A harbinger unto Zion will I give: 'Behold, behold them,' and to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings." In the Babylonian Talmud the tractate *Pesachim* 5a definitely points to the Messiah as the person referred to in this prophecy.²²

The *Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis explains that God “will bring you the first, viz. the royal Messiah, of whom it is written, *A harbinger [lit. ‘first’] unto Zion will I give: Behold, behold them, and unto Jerusalem*, etc. (Isa. XLI, 27).”²³

And the *Midrash Rabbah* on Leviticus identifies him as “the King Messiah, of whom it is written [quoting Isaiah 41:27].”²⁴

In Isaiah 52:7 this is said to Israel: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of good tidings, that announceth peace, the harbinger of good tidings, that announceth salvation; that saith unto Zion: ‘Thy God reigneth!’” The *Midrash Rabbah* on Leviticus comments thus on that statement by Isaiah: “The Rabbis said: Great is peace, seeing that when the Messianic king is to come, he will commence with peace, as it is said [quoting Isaiah 52:7].”²⁵

In addition, verse 13 of Isaiah 52 says: “Behold, My servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.” The Targum to Isaiah explains it in this way: “Behold, My servant, the Anointed One (or, *the Messiah*), shall prosper; he shall be exalted, and increase, and be very strong.”

What are we to gather from all this? This: (1) that the Messianic hope has been cherished as a God-given heritage by the Hebrew people since very ancient times; (2) the Messiah would be a *person* and as such a “son” or descendant of King David; (3) that at a future time he would sit upon King David’s throne and reign righteously over God’s people; and (4) that his reign would endure throughout the rest of eternity. In fact, it is quite evident that the hope of the coming of the Messiah as a son of King David and the ultimate heir to his throne long antedated the birth of Jesus of Nazareth and the Christian movement which rose in Israel nearly 2,000 years ago.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See, for example, BT *Sukkah* 52b; and *Sotah* 48b.
2. BT *Sukkah* 52a, (p. 247, Soncino ed.).

3. BT *Sanhedrin* 97a-99a.
4. See BT *Yebamoth* 62a, 63b; *Sanhedrin* 38a, 96b, 97a, 97b, 98a; *Kethuboth* 112b; *Megillah* 17b; 'Abodah Zarah 5a:
5. The *Midrash Rabbah* on Numbers, chap. 13, sect. 14 (vol. 2, p. 528, Soncino ed.).
6. *Ibid.* on Exodus, chap. 19, sect. 7 (pp. 237, 238, Socino ed.).
7. *Ibid.* on Genesis, chap. 97 (vol. 2, p. 901, Socino ed.).
8. *Ibid.* on the Song of Songs, chap. 2, sect. 13, part 4 (p. 127, Soncino ed.).
9. *Ibid.* on Leviticus, chap. 31, sect. 11 (pp. 405, 406, Soncino 3e.).
10. See Isaiah 1:1; 6:1; 7:1, 10-13; 8:2 (with 2 Kings 16:10); 20:1; 36:1-22; 37:1-38; 38:1-22; 39:1-8; 2 Kings 19:2-6, 20; 20:19; 2 Chronicles 26:22-32.
11. *Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis, chap. 44, sect. 8 (vol. 1, pp. 365, 366, Soncino ed.).
12. *Ibid.* on Deuteronomy, chap. 1, sect. 20 (p.22, Soncino ed.).
13. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 8, p. 506, art. "Messiah."
14. BT *Sanhedrin* 93b, p. 626.
15. The *Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis, chap. 2, sect. 4 (vol. 1, p. 17).
16. *Ibid.*, chap. 97 (vol. 2, p. 902, Soncino ed.).
17. *Ibid.* on Numbers, chap. 13, sect. 11 (vol. 2, pp. 522, 523, Soncino ed.).
18. *Ibid.* on Ruth, chap. 7, sect. 2 (p.83, Soncino ed.): on Lamentations, chap. 1, sect. 16 (p. 137).
19. *Ibid.* on Genesis, chap. 97 (vol. 2, p. 901, Soncino ed.).
20. *The Midrash on Psalms*, Psalm 21:1, (vol. 1, p. 293).
21. *Ibid.*, Psalm 110:4 (vol. 2, p. 206).
22. BT *Pesachim* 5a (p. 17, Soncino ed.).
23. The *Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis, chap. 63, sect. 8 (vol. 2, p. 562, Soncino ed.).
24. *Ibid.*, on Leviticus, chap. 30, sect. 16 (p. 395, Soncino ed.).
25. *Ibid.*, on Leviticus, chap. 9, sect. 9 (p. 120, Soncino ed.).



MESSIAH, SON OF DAVID (2)

AMOS the seer spoke for the Lord during the reigns of Uzziah (Amaziah), king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel. Amos 1:1. He began his prophetic ministry shortly before Isaiah commenced his. Amos presented to Israel this prediction from God:

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old.” Amos 9:11.

When Amos uttered those words, the Hebrew people were divided into two nations, each with its own king. Early in the reign of King Rehoboam, a grandson of King David, Jeroboam I led ten of the tribes of Israel to revolt (about 931 B.C.E.), and they established themselves as a separate kingdom called Israel, with Shechem as its capital in the north. 1 Kings 12:25. The tribes of Benjamin, Judah, and the Levites, remained loyal to the Davidic dynasty, known as the kingdom of Judah thereafter, with Jerusalem as its capital. Cut off by their rulers from the worship of the true God at the Temple in Jerusalem, the masses of the northern kingdom drifted into the worship of Baal, the god of the Phoenicians.

The prophecy of Amos assured the faithful few that the distressing breach would be healed someday and that the Davidic dynasty would be restored to its divinely appointed position of leadership over all of God's people.

Amos 9:11 was regarded by Jewish religious teachers as a Messianic prophecy.¹ In his comment on that verse, Dr. A. Cohen has aptly remarked that “the outlook here is Messianic.”²

Hosea, another prophet, ministered during the reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, and in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hosea 1:1. Through this seer the Lord said:

“For the children of Israel shall sit solitary many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king: and shall come trembling unto the Lord and to His goodness in the end of days.” Hosea 3:4, 5.

According to that prophecy, there would be in the future a very long period—of “many days”—when the people of Israel would appear to be forsaken or “solitary,” and during that time they would be “without king, and without prince”—that is, without national existence as a monarchy. Also, they would be “without sacrifice, . . . and without ephod”—that is, deprived of the ritualistic services and the priestly ministry at the Temple. Also they would be “without pillar, and without . . . teraphim”—that is, during that long period they would not drift *en masse* again into heathen idolatry, in which pillars and teraphim played a part.

“Afterward”—after that long period of “many days”—the children of Israel would “return” (by true repentance), and “seek the Lord their God, *and David their king*; and . . . come trembling unto the Lord and to His goodness *in the end of days*.” How could they seek “David their king” after so long a time, after so “many days,” and “in the end of days,” in view of the fact that David had died about 971 B.C.E. (1 Kings 2:10, 11; 1 Chronicles 29:26-30), nearly 300 years before Hosea penned those words?

According to the *Targum to Hosea*, the expression “David their king” refers not to King David himself, but to “the Messiah the son of David.” In him the Davidic dynasty would be preeminently personified and continued throughout eternity.³

Micah the prophet was also active during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (Micah 1:1), as a contemporary of Isaiah. The Lord gave him this message for Israel:

“But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from ancient days. Therefore will He give them up, until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth; then the residue of his brethren shall return with the children of Israel.” Micah 5:1,2.

Beth-lehem Ephrathah was the birthplace of King David. 1 Samuel 17:12. That prophecy has long been understood by Israel’s religious teachers to be Messianic. The Babylonian Talmud says: “The son of David will not come until the wicked kingdom of Rome will have spread [its sway] over the whole world for nine months, as it is said: *Therefore will He give them up, until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth; then the residue of his brethren shall return with the children of Israel* [Micah 5:2].”

The *Targum to Micah* says that “the Messiah” is the one who shall come forth out of Bethlehem of Judah and be “ruler in Israel.”

Dr. A. Cohen, in his work *The Twelve Prophets*, which contains the Hebrew text with an English translation and commentary, remarks:

“This prophecy of the Messiah is comparable with the more famous *shoot out of the stock of Jesse* prophecy in Isa. XI. To hearten the people in their calamitous plight, Micah foretells the coming of one from Beth-lehem (i.e., of the house of David) who, in the strength of the Lord, will restore Israel to their land and rule over them in God’s name in abiding peace.”

Doubtless some who had read the prophecy of Daniel 9, and whose Talmudic comment on Micah 5:1, 2 is quoted

above, concluded that Rome's universal sway over men would last at least nine months, because the period of pregnancy of the woman who would give birth to the Messiah would last about that long!

Jeremiah's prophetic ministry began in Josiah's thirteenth year as king of Judah (Jeremiah 1:1, 2) about 625 B.C.E., and continued beyond the destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in 586 B.C.E. In one of the messages borne by Jeremiah, the Lord said:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous shoot, and he shall reign as king and prosper, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord is our righteousness." Jeremiah 23:5, 6.

When that prophetic message was given, the outlook seemed dark and dismal for the Jews. The kingdom of Israel to the north, with its capital in Samaria, had been destroyed (about 722 B.C.E.) by the Assyrians during the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah. 2 Kings 18:9-12. The sins and apostasy that had led to the ruin of the northern kingdom were now making rapid inroads into the southern kingdom, and soon the armies of Babylon would take Jerusalem, burn it with fire, destroy the Temple, and remove most of the survivors to exile in distant lands.

The prophecy of Jeremiah 23:5, 6, and others like it, must have been very precious and comforting to the faithful when the lamps went out in the Temple in 586 B.C.E. By that statement the people were taught that the coming of the Messiah was still certain as well as future. It assured them that the long-expected son of David would yet come and reign over a united Israel. Both "Judah" and "Israel"—the two kingdoms into which the Hebrew people had been divided since about 931 B.C.E.—would yet be one under his rule, and then there would be justice, peace, and safety for all.

For centuries Jewish religious teachers have taught that Jeremiah 23:5, 6 is a Messianic prophecy. For example: "What is the name of King Messiah? Rabbi Abba B. Kahana said: His name is 'the Lord'; as it is stated: *And this is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord is our righteousness* [Jeremiah xxiii. 6]."⁶ The same thing is taught in the Babylonian Talmud.⁷

Rabbi H. Freedman, in his comment on Jeremiah 23:5, 6, says: "In contrast to the unhappy past, a Messianic prophecy of hope for the future is spoken."⁸ And concerning the word "shoot" in verse 5, Dr. Freedman remarks: "Hebrew *tsemech*, the term used to denote the Messianic king (cf. xxxiii. 15; Zech. iii. 8, vi. 12)."⁹

In Jeremiah 30:9 this further exhortation to hope and courage was given by the Lord to His people: "But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them."

That prophecy is similar to those in Amos 9:11 and Hosea 3:5 in this respect: It was uttered centuries after King David had died, and yet it declares that the Lord will raise unto His people "David their king"!

Rabbi Freedman's comment on Jeremiah 30:9 is very appropriate: "His Messianic regent on earth would be a scion of the house of David (cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Hos. iii.5)."¹⁰

Ezekiel, a contemporary of Jeremiah, also prophesied for the Lord on the subject. He was taken, when about 25 years old, into the Babylonian exile with King Jehoiachin of Judah in 597 B.C.E. Ezekiel 1:1-3. In the fifth year of his captivity, and thus not long before Jerusalem fell, Ezekiel delivered to disobedient King Zedekiah of Judah a message which said:

"Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the mitre, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." Ezekiel 21: 31, 32, Alexander Harkavy's translation.

In comment on that prophecy Rabbi S. Fisch fittingly remarks:

“The ultimate restoration will happen at an unspecified time in the future with the advent of the Messiah. The phrase *until he come whose right it is* recalls the Messianic prophecy in Gen. xlix. 10.”¹¹

That is, the overthrow of the Davidic monarchy by the Babylonians, when they destroyed Jerusalem and took King Zedekiah in chains to prison in Babylon in 586 B.C.E., would be followed and continued by a threefold overturning—that of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece, as foretold in the prophecies of Daniel—until he comes whose right it is, and to him the royal prerogatives of the Davidic dynasty would be given.

The God of Israel has ever dealt tenderly and mercifully with His people. The Messianic prophecy given to Ezekiel in that time of widespread apostasy and overwhelming calamity, was to be to the faithful, both then and during the stormy centuries which would follow, a bright star of hope above the dark international horizon. Though the Hebrew people would long be without a king of Davidic lineage as their earthly ruler, yet they had ever before them the assurance from Israel's God that ultimately he—the Messiah—would come whose right it is, and to him the crown and prerogatives of the Davidic dynasty would be given.

Yes, the coming of Messiah, the son of David, was still future. After Jerusalem fell in 586 B.C.E., Ezekiel was given this promise for Israel: “And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even My servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and My servant David prince among them; I the Lord have spoken.” Ezekiel 34:23, 24.

Rabbi S. Fisch, in comment on the words “one shepherd . . . My servant David,” remarks: “The allusion is to the Messianic age. The sufferings caused by unjust rulers having ended

by the intervention of God, Israel will enjoy peace and prosperity under the sway of an ideal shepherd, of whom David is the prototype."¹²

These Messianic prophecies must be considered in the context of the times in which they were given in order to be appreciated fully. Try to imagine what it was like to be a faithful Jew living in that terrible period of Israel's history. The northern kingdom of Israel and Samaria (its capital city) had been destroyed by the Assyrians about 722 B.C.E. And now the southern kingdom of Judah, and Jerusalem (its capital city), were a heap of rubble and ashes. Nearly all the survivors of those two great calamities were scattered as exiles in distant lands. The Shekinah had departed from the Temple, the lights on its lampstand had been snuffed out, the building and its altars destroyed, the priestly ministries had ceased, and the services of the Sanctuary were no more.

But the memory of them still lingered in the minds of the faithful who prayed three times a day, as Daniel did, with their faces turned toward Jerusalem. Many a questioning heart must have said to itself: What about the promise which God gave to King David by the prophet Nathan, and which later prophets reiterated, that in the distant future one of his male descendants would sit upon his throne and reign gloriously over Israel forever? Is such a thing possible? Have we been clutching to our breasts a Messianic hope that is nothing more than a will-o'-the wisp?

As if in answer to that question, the Lord gave to Ezekiel this message for his people: "Take thee one stick, and write upon it: For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions; then take another stick, and write upon it: For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and of all the house of Israel his companions." Ezekiel 37:16.

The one stick symbolized the kingdom of Judah (destroyed in 586 B.C.E.), and the other represented the kingdom of Israel (destroyed in 722 B.C.E.). The latter kingdom had its capital

originally at Shechem, a Levite city of refuge in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim. 1 Kings 12:25.

“Join them for thee one to another into one stick,” the Lord went on to say to the seer, “that they may become one [stick] in thy hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying: Wilt thou not tell us what thou meanest by these? say unto them: Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his companions; and I will put them unto him together with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in My hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thy hand before their eyes.” Ezekiel 37: 17-20.

And while delivering that message to his people, the seer was to hold up before them the two sticks, as a prophetic object lesson, and to say:

“Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. . .

“And My servant *David shall be king over them*, and they all shall have one shepherd; and they shall also walk in Mine ordinances, and observe My statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children’s children, for ever; and *David My servant shall be their prince for ever.*” Verses 21-25.

King David had died about the year 971 B.C.E.—nearly 400 years before Ezekiel’s message was given! How, then, could it be that God’s “servant David shall be king over them,” and “shall be their prince for ever,” *after* Ezekiel’s time?

The explanation the ancient sages used to give to that question is this, according to one of the tractates of the Babylonian Talmud:

“The Holy One, blessed be He, will raise up another David for us, as it is written, *But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them:* not ‘I raised up,’ but ‘I will raise up’ is said. R. Papa said to Abaye: But it is written, *And my servant David* shall be their prince [nasi] for ever?”¹³

Yes, the Lord will “raise up another David”—Messiah, the son of David—to be our king. Dr. A. Cohen’s comment on the same prophecy says: “The Messiah will be called David, because he will be descended from him.”¹⁴

And Rabbi S. Fisch remarks that “the term prince in this context is a designation for the Messiah,” and he adds that “this assurance indicates that the prophecy of the restoration and reunion of the Kingdoms relates to the Messianic era.”¹⁵

After the return of the exiles from the Babylonian captivity, and while the work on building the second Temple was in progress in the reign of Darius I (Hystaspes), king of Persia (see Ezra 6:14; Zechariah 1:1, 7; 7:1), a message given by another prophet said:

“Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying: Behold, a man whose name is the Shoot, and who shall shoot up out of his place, and build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and there shall be a priest before his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” Zechariah 6:12, 13.

The *Targum to Zechariah* says concerning “the Shoot” who shall sit and rule upon his throne: “Messiah is his name.”

Another example illustrates how the prophecy of Zechariah 6:12 was regarded as Messianic: “The double *zade* is hinted at in the verse, *Behold, a man whose name is the shoot (zemah), and who shall shoot up (yizmah), etc. (Zech. VI, 12).*

This refers to the Messiah, of whom it also says, *I will raise unto David a righteous shoot (zemah zaddik), and he shall reign as king and prosper, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.* [Jer. XXIII. 5].”¹⁶

That prophecy of Zechariah is discussed thus by ancient Jewish teachers:

“What is the name of King Messiah? R. Abba b. Kahana said: His name is ‘the Lord’; as it is stated, *And this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord is our righteousness* (Jer. XXIII, 6). For R. Levi said: It is good for a province when its name is identical with that of its king, and the name of its king identical with that of its God. ‘It is good for a province when its name is identical with that of its king,’ as it is written, *And the name of the city from that day shall be the Lord is there* (Ezek. XLVIII, 35). ‘And the name of its king identical with that of its God,’ as it is stated, *‘And this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord is our righteousness.’* R. Joshua b. Levi said: His name is ‘Shoot’; as it is stated, *Behold, a man whose name is Shoot, and who shall shoot up out of his place, and build the temple of the Lord* (Zech. VI, 12).”¹⁷

In another prophecy, Zechariah said: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh unto thee, he is triumphant, and victorious, lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass.” And it adds: “his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.” Zechariah 9:9. 10.

This prophecy was highly regarded as Messianic by the Jewish teachers of past centuries. For example, in the Babylonian Talmud it is viewed as follows:

“R. Hillel said: There shall be no Messiah for Israel, because they have already enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah. R. Joseph said: May God forgive him [for saying so]. Now, when did Hezekiah flourish? During the first Temple. Yet Zechariah,

prophesying in the days of the second, proclaimed, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh unto thee! he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”¹⁸

Rabbi Joseph’s reasoning was sound. King Hezekiah had lived while the first Temple was standing, and had died about 686 B.C.E.—a century before that sacred edifice was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. Zechariah’s prophecy was not uttered until after the fourth year of the reign of King Darius I (Hystaspes) of Persia (see Zechariah 7:1), which was 518 B.C.E., and while the second Temple was in the process of construction. In fact, “this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.” Ezra 6:15. Thus the fact that the coming of the Messiah to reign as king was still future in Zechariah’s time has exploded the mistaken notion that King Hezekiah was Messiah the son of David.

Dr. A. Cohen in his comment cites Rashi as follows: “This can only refer to King Messiah of whom it is said, *And his dominion shall be from sea to sea*, since we do not find any ruler with such wide dominion during the days of the Second Temple.”¹⁹

In an ancient discussion of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, this comment was given concerning Isaiah 26:6: “*Even the feet of the poor* (Isa. 26:6): that is, the king Messiah, ‘poor, and riding upon an ass’ (Zech. 9:9), will trample Edom down.”²⁰

In reference to the various animals mentioned in Genesis 32:6, this thought was raised: “Ass refers to the royal Messiah, for it says of him, *Lowly and riding upon an ass* (Zech. IX. 9).”²¹

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. BT *Sanhedrin* 96b and 97a, p. 654, Soncino ed.
2. A. Cohen, *The Twelve Prophets*, p. 123.
3. BT *Megillah* 17b, pp. 107, 108, Soncino ed.
4. BT *Yoma* 10a (p. 44, Soncino ed.). Also *Sanhedrin* 98b, p. 665.
5. Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 174.
6. *Midrash Rabbah* on Lamentations, chap. 1, sect. 51, pp. 135, 136.
7. BT *Baba Bathra* 75b (p. 303 Soncino ed.).
8. H. Freedman, *Jeremiah*, p. 152.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
10. Freedman, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
11. S. Fisch, *Ezekiel*, p. 141.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
13. BT *Sanhedrin* 98b, p. 668.
14. A. Cohen, *The Soncino Chumash*, p. 294.
15. S. Fisch, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
16. *Midrash Rabbah* on Numbers, chap. 18, sect. 21, vol. 2, p. 734.
17. *Ibid.*, on Lamentations, chap. 1, sect. 51, pp. 135, 136.
18. BT *Sanhedrin* 99a, p. 669.
19. Cohen, *The Twelve Prophets*, p. 305.
20. *The Midrash on Psalms*, Psalm 60, sect. 3, vol. 1, p. 516.
21. *Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis, chap. 75, sect. 6, vol. 2, p. 698.



HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENED

ISRAEL'S second exodus was about to begin! Their 70 years of Babylonian captivity was ending. Surely many a Hebrew heart was thrilled by the thought that they would soon be returning to Palestine.

Old exiles must have wondered what Jerusalem would be like after its destruction by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. Boys and girls were anxious to see the Land of Israel. It was now the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede over Babylon (539/538 B.C.E.), according to Daniel 9:1, 2. But the captivity of the Jewish exiles had begun with the first of a series of deportations of Jews from Judea in 606/605 B.C.E., when King Nebuchadnezzar made the kingdom of Judah a vassal province of his vast empire.

When their Babylonian captivity began, the Lord gave to His chosen people this promise: "It shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity," etc. Jeremiah 25:1, 11, 12.

In fact, God had instructed His prophet in Jerusalem to send to the leaders of the Jewish exiles a letter saying: "After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will remember you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. . . . I will turn your captivity, and gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you back unto the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive." See Jeremiah 29:1, 2, 10-14.

In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (604/603 B.C.E.) the spotlight of sacred prophecy was focused by God upon the world's future. A remarkable dream was then given to that king, and interpreted by Daniel, as recorded in chapter 2 of the Book of Daniel. Mankind was given thereby a preview of the major events of the world's political history from the sixth century B.C.E. down to our time and beyond. It foretold the succession of Babylon (606-539 B.C.E.), Medo-Persia (539-331 B.C.E.), Greece (331-168 B.C.E.), Rome (168 B.C.E. to 476 C.E.), Rome divided into smaller nations (as at present), and ultimately God's universal and everlasting kingdom upon earth (yet future).

In Nebuchadnezzar's nineteenth regnal year (586 B.C.E.) he utterly destroyed Jerusalem, including her Temple, and left nothing there but rubble and desolation. His last deportation of Jews into exile occurred in his twenty-third year (582 B.C.E.). The story of this calamity, and why the Lord permitted it to happen, are recorded in 2 Kings 24 and 25; 2 Chronicles 36; Jeremiah 24:5, 6; 29:4-7; 52:1-30.

The long reign of Nebuchadnezzar (606-562 B.C.E.) was followed by political weakness and upheaval in the Babylonian Empire.

The prophecy in Daniel 2 said nothing about the Jewish people in particular. It was, however, a precious manifestation of the love and concern of the God of Israel for the whole human race—both Jews and Gentiles—who would have to live in the topsy-turvy world of the future.

Later, in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar (about 553/552 B.C.E.)—the oldest son and co-regent of Nabonidus, king of Babylon—Daniel was given a remarkable night vision which corroborated the prophecy of Daniel 2. It foretold, as recorded in Daniel 7, two additional events of the future, which would be of great significance. *First*, among the nations into which the Roman Empire would be divided, there would arise a very cruel and despotic religiopolitical regime especially

inimical to all who would stand loyal to the God of Israel in obedience to His law. During the 1260 years of its tyrannical dominion (from 538 to 1798 C.E.), those faithful to God would suffer great persecution, and many would be destroyed. Daniel 7:8, 11, 20, 21, 24-26. *Second*, in the last days and before the establishment of the Messianic kingdom upon earth, the great day of pre-advent judgment would begin, with God Himself presiding as judge. Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14, 22, 26.

In Belshazzar's third year as co-regent (551/550 B.C.E.), Daniel was at the palace in Shushan (Susa), in the province of Elam. Daniel 8:1, 2. While there he was given another vision of the future, one that was of special importance to the Jewish people.

The spotlight of prophecy was focused on the coming of a mighty ram (Daniel 8:1-4) symbolizing the Medo-Persian Empire (verse 20). Next came a furious he-goat (verses 5-7), representing the Grecian Empire (verse 21). The notable horn between the goat's eyes (verses 5, 8) symbolized its first ruler (verses 21, 22), Alexander the Great (331-323 B.C.E.).

Four new horns came up in place of the first after it was broken (verse 8), indicating that after Alexander's death his empire would be divided into four major kingdoms (verse 22), besides some minor states. There were four generals—Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus Nicator, and Ptolemy—each of whom assumed the title of king. Cassander took Macedonia and claimed authority over Greece; Lysimachus held Thrace and the western part of Asia Minor; Seleucus Nicator ruled over Syria and countries lying to the east of it; and Ptolemy held sway over Egypt.

As the seer beheld, he saw a sixth horn appear among the four horns previously mentioned. Though small at first, it "waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and *toward the beauteous land*." Verse 9. The phrase "beauteous land" is a specific reference to the land of Israel, indicating that at this juncture in future history a period of

major importance would begin for the Jewish people.

Before the Kingdom of Judah was destroyed in 586 B.C.E., the Lord referred to the land of Israel as “the beauty of all lands.” Ezekiel 20:6. And while the returned exiles were restoring Jerusalem after their 70 years of Babylonian captivity had ended, He reminded them that enemy nations had “laid the pleasant land desolate.” Zechariah 7:14. And later, in the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede (539/538 B.C.E.), the “beauteous” land was mentioned again. See Daniel 11:16, 45.

As the vision continued, Daniel the seer noted that this sixth horn “waxed great, even against the host of heaven; and some of the host and of the stars it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them. Yea, it magnified itself against the Prince of the host; and from him the continual ministration was taken away, and the fixed place of his Sanctuary was cast down. And a host was given against the continual ministration by transgression; and it cast down truth to the ground, and it wrought, and prospered.” Daniel 8:11, 12.¹

At this point a voice was heard to inquire: “Until when [shall be] the vision [concerning] the continual ministration, and the desolating transgression, to give the sanctuary and the host to be trampled?” Verse 13.

The reply was: “Until two thousand and three hundred evening-mornings, and a sanctuary shall be cleansed.” Verse 14.

When, later, the seer manifested his desire to understand the vision, the angel Gabriel was told to explain it to him. This is the only holy angel identified by name in the Sacred Scriptures, and this is the first mention of him. Verse 16. He is mentioned again by name in Daniel 9:21, an important point to be remembered in our study on Daniel 9:24-27.

On ending his remarks about the four horns, which we have noted above, Gabriel directed Daniel’s attention to the sixth one, by explaining: “And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors shall have reached their full measure,

a king of fierce countenance and understanding intrigues shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, and not in his own strength; and shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and shall do; and he shall destroy mighty ones and a people of saints. And by his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper in his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart: and in security he shall destroy many; and he shall stand up against the Prince of princes; and he shall be broken without hand.” Daniel 8:23-25.

At this point something happened, and Gabriel cut short his explanation by making this terse statement to the seer: “And the vision of the evening-mornings which was mentioned, it [is] truth; and thou, shut thou up the vision, because it [shall be for] many days.” Verse 26.

What happened? The seer explains: “And I, Daniel, fainted, and was sick [for some] days; and I arose, and I did the king’s work; and I was perplexed concerning the vision, and there was none who understood [it].” Verse 27.

As a result of beholding in vision the depredations of the cruel power symbolized by that sixth horn, Daniel became ill for some days. His desire to understand the vision more fully did not diminish. His words imply that he consulted somebody else about it, but none could help him. It is clear, however, that an explanation of the part about the 2300 days (“evening-mornings”) would not be an immediate necessity, because it would be for “many days”—that is, for the distant future.

What mighty political power is symbolized by the sixth horn? It would be a power separate and distinct from those represented by the preceding four horns. It would rise in “the latter time” of those four powers, and it would exceed them in might. Although some commentators have thought that this refers to Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), he obviously was not that power because he, as ruler of Syria from 175 to 164 B.C.E., was but a small link in the dynastic chain of Syrian kings descended from Seleucus Nicator (died about 280 B.C.E.),

represented by one of the four horns which preceded the sixth one. While it is true that Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) suspended the services of the Temple in Jerusalem from 168 to 165 B.C.E., and even polluted it, *he did not destroy either it or the city*, “the fixed place of the Sanctuary.”

According to Daniel 8:9 that sixth horn, which symbolized a fierce power yet to play a major role in the international scene of the future, would begin to loom large by appearing among the previous four already mentioned. And, as noted already, it would do so “in the latter time” of their dominion. Verse 23. After that it would penetrate “toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the beauteous land.” Verse 9. And that is just the way Rome, in the west, began its rise as a world empire.

First, the Roman legions entered Macedonia, the principal part of the kingdom that had belonged to Cassander, and crushed forever the supremacy of the Greek arms in the decisive battle of Pydna in 168 B.C.E.

Second, the Romans turned “toward the south” in 146 B.C.E., desolated the mighty city of Carthage on the northern coast of Africa, and annexed her territory to the domain of Rome.

Third, Pompey the Great and his Roman legions met the challenge of Mithradates VI, king of Parthia—in the east—by destroying him and his armies in 65/64 B.C.E.

Fourth, at the same time Pompey subdued Syria and integrated it into the Roman Empire.

Fifth, at the insistent urging of the Jewish brothers Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, Pompey and his Roman legions entered “the beauteous land” (Palestine) to put a stop to their civil war and decide which of them should be the ruler of Judea. This he did in 63 B.C.E. by deciding in favor of Hyrcanus II.² He then made Judea a province of the Roman Empire, placed it under tribute to Rome, and took Aristobulus captive to Rome. This was the first time that Roman soldiers set

foot in the land of Israel. Judea remained under Roman domination until long after the Jewish commonwealth, Jerusalem, and the Temple were destroyed by the army of Emperor Vespasian and his son Titus in 70 C.E.

The "Prince of the host" mentioned in Daniel 8:11 is identified by Gabriel as "the Prince of princes." Verse 25. Who is he? In the English text of Isaac Leeser's translation the term "prince" is capitalized in the phrase "the Prince of princes."

The Hebrew term rendered as "prince" in the English version is *sar*, which usually denotes a person of very high rank and authority. For example, Daniel speaks of "the prince [*sar*] of Persia" and "the prince [*sar*] of Greece" (Daniel 10:13,20), in reference to the rulers of those great empires.

Another Heavenly being mentioned by Daniel is "Michael, one of the chief princes [*sarim*]." Daniel 10:13. In his relationship to the faithful in Israel, he is "Michael your Prince [*sar*]." Verse 21. Also, "Michael, . . . the great Prince [*sar*] who standeth for the children of thy people." Daniel 12:1. The fact that the celestial being referred to in Daniel 8:11, 25 is not only a *sar* but also the *sar sarim* (Prince of princes) is certain evidence that he is a personage of very high rank and authority in the sight of God. Could it be that this "Prince of princes" would be Israel's long-expected Messiah, "the Prince [*sar*] of peace" promised in Isaiah 9:5, 6?

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. These two and the remaining verses quoted from Daniel 8 are translated by the author from the Hebrew text.
2. Josephus gives the date as: "The city was taken, in the third month, on the Fast Day, in the hundred and seventy-ninth Olympiad, in the consulship of Gaius Antonius and Marcus Tullius Cicero."—*Antiq.*, bk. 14, chap. 4, sect. 3 (HUP vol. 7, p. 481). See also pp. 467-487 for the story.



A SIGNIFICANT PROPHECY

Daniel 9:24-27

THE VISION recorded and interpreted in Daniel 8 and 9 was given to Daniel near the close of the 70 years of Babylonian captivity of the Jews, foretold by Jeremiah the prophet.¹ That 70-year period began in 605 and ended in 536 B.C.E. The overthrow of Babylon had taken place *after* the vision of chapter 8 and *before* the interpretation was completed in chapter 9. This information gives added significance to the prophecy because Cyrus the Great would soon issue, in 536 B.C.E., his famous decree permitting the exiled Jews to return from the lands of their captivity to Palestine, their homeland.² In seeking the correct interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 we must keep in mind that this is a part of the story of the vision given to Daniel in chapter 8 and his prayer for an explanation of it in chapter 9:1-23. While the angel was interpreting what had been shown to him in the vision, Daniel “fainted, and was sick certain days.” Daniel 8:27. After his recovery from that illness, the seer turned to the Lord in prayer for more information concerning the vision. In response to his earnest petition, the angel Gabriel was sent by the Lord to finish interpreting the vision. Verses 20-23. In doing so, he said:

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed the prince

shall be seven weeks: and during threescore and two weeks it shall be built again, with street and trench, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall the anointed be cut off, and there shall be none to succeed him: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and for half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” Daniel 9:24-27, Alexander Harkavy’s translation.

In comment on the prophetic period of “seventy weeks” in Daniel 9:24 and other time periods foretold in the book of Daniel as they relate to Israel’s long-cherished hope of the coming of the Messiah, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver has wisely commented:

“These were challenging and tantalizing figures. What were the terminals of these cryptic dates? Surely they cannot be mutually exclusive. They must all be graded historical moments in the great drama of Israel’s Redemption leading up to the ultimate Messianic day. Do the days mean years? Do the weeks mean seven years? . . . These and numerous other questions presented themselves to those who embarked upon the fascinating enterprise of unraveling the great mystery.”

One traditional but erroneous view concerning the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 assumes that the 70 weeks (or 490 years) began with the commencement of the 70 years of Babylonian captivity of the Jews, which ended at the issuing of the decree of Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, in 536 B.C.E., as stated in Ezra 1:1-4; 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23. Failing to find a satisfactory solution based on that assumption, it is further assumed by some that there is no conceivable period from which the 70 weeks are to be computed.

Could it be that some Jewish scholars, however wise they may be, are not infallible in their methods and opinions, and that they may have been sincerely mistaken in their assumptions in this matter?

The God of Israel has said to His people: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord." Isaiah 55:8. That reminds us to remain humble and teachable. God alone is infallible, and man is not. Therefore, when we fail to really understand what He says, or are unable to solve some of the problems we encounter in the study of His Word, we can be sure that it is we who are mistaken and not He. The wily Balaam of long ago was bent on having sacred prophecy work out according to his plans. But he soon learned that "*God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: when He hath said, will He not do it? Or when He hath spoken, will He not make it good?*" Numbers 23:19.

Several years ago a very prominent and influential man in the civic circles of one of our nation's largest metropolitan areas found delight in challenging the editors and writers of various religious periodicals concerning theological subjects. In his first letter to me this very intelligent Jew declared, in substance, that belief in the advent of the Messiah to redeem the faithful and put an end to wickedness in our world is an absurd religious notion borrowed by Jewish exiles from Persian paganism of ancient times. His letter sizzled with redhot scorn at the idea of the coming of a Hebrew Messiah.

We wrote to him a short but kind letter, asking him if he was trying to tell the world that the religion of the people of Israel, as taught in the Holy Scriptures, is nothing more than a hodgepodge of Jewish and pagan notions; and that certain books of the Bible, which they had preserved and cherished through the ages even at the cost of great suffering and loss of life, are corrupt writings consisting of an intermingling of fact and fiction, of heathen notions and Hebrew fancies?

We reminded him that in many a land and many a century, Jewish hearts had declared, "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and though he tarry, I will wait for his coming." This hope is as old as the Bible itself, and that is why it became enshrined as Article 12 of the Thirteen Principles (Articles) of the Faith. We asked if he would have the world believe that to be a false hope, that declaration to be a lie, and that the gift of it to mankind through the Sacred Scriptures by the Hebrew prophets was the hoax of the ages, perpetrated by the religious leaders of the Hebrew people.

A few weeks later we received from that same man a mellow and appreciative response, which he closed by reciting the above-mentioned Article of Faith. And he added: "May He come in my lifetime and yours!" In response, we wrote a letter of appreciation and encouragement. A few weeks afterward his wife wrote the sad news that he had passed to his rest. It is our sincere hope that we shall meet him in person in the last great day. It gave me joy to know that he had come to the end of his life with an affirmation of the blessed hope of the coming of Israel's long-promised Messiah.

In the Babylonian Talmud it is said that some of the learned rabbis were discussing the circumstances under which a Nazarite might be released from his vow. Rabbah put this question to them: "Suppose someone had come and said to you that the Temple would be destroyed, would you have uttered your vow?"

"R. Joseph said: Had I been there, I should have said to them: Is it not written, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these* [Jer. VII. 1], which points to [the destruction of] the first and second temples?—Granted that they knew it would be destroyed, did they know when this would occur?

"Abaye objected: And did they not know when? Is it not written *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city* [Dan. IX. 24]?—All the same, did they know on which day?"

Editorial footnote no. 6 comments: "This prophecy was uttered at the beginning of the seventy years captivity in Babylon. From the restoration to the second destruction is said to have been 420 years, making in all 490, i.e., seventy weeks of years."⁶

That is a mistake. The Sacred Record states that it was in "the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans" (Daniel 9:1), that the angel Gabriel gave that prophetic revelation to Daniel (verses 20-27). Daniel had been reading Jeremiah's prophecy that the desolation of Jerusalem would extend over a period of 70 years (verse 2). That prophecy was given in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (Jeremiah 25:1-3, 9-12)—that is, about 605 B.C.E. It was repeated again before Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C.E. Jeremiah 29:10. Hence, the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 was given near the close of the 70 years of the Babylonian exile and *not at its commencement*. See Ezra 1:1-4; 2 Chronicles 36:20, 21.

Israel's First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. and the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E. This interval of 656 years between the destruction of the two Temples exceeds by 166 years the time period of 490 years (the 70 weeks of years specified in Daniel 9:24), as the footnote quoted above states.

It is obvious, therefore, that the above-mentioned rabbinical interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 by some scholars is unsound. Hence it is necessary that we review this puzzling prophecy in order that we may correctly understand its significance for us. That is the purpose we have in mind as we continue this study.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Jeremiah 25:9-12; 29:10.

2. 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1-4.
3. Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel*, p. 243.
4. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, p. 151, art. "Articles of Faith."
5. BT *Nazir* 32b (p. 118, Soncino ed.).
6. *Ibid.*, p. 118.



PROPHETIC HIGHLIGHTS

DANIEL, a Hebrew seer of the God of Israel, was the prime minister in the cabinet of King Darius the Mede who ruled over the Medo-Persian Empire while his nephew, Cyrus the Great, extended and consolidated his conquest immediately after the fall of Babylon to his armies in 539/538 B.C.E. Now, in the first year of the reign of King Darius (538/537 B.C.E.), Daniel was a very puzzled man. Daniel 9:1-19. He was not then wrestling with some difficult political problem of the Medo-Persian government. A deep concern for the spiritual wellbeing of the Jewish people was weighing heavily upon the seer's mind and heart.

Soon, as God had promised, the seventy years of Babylonian captivity would end for the Jews, and King Cyrus the Great would be divinely moved to issue a decree granting to all Jews everywhere freedom to return to the Holy Land and to rebuild Jerusalem and her Temple.¹

In telling us of his great concern for his people, the seer says: "I Daniel meditated in the books over the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem seventy years. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." Daniel 9:2,3. He acknowledged with deep sorrow before God that His people had grievously sinned against Him, and that they had deserved the dire consequences of their disobedience and the resultant destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by their enemies. In earnestly beseeching the Lord to forgive His people the wrong they had done, Daniel pleaded:

“Let Thine anger and Thy fury, I pray Thee, be turned away from Thy city Jerusalem. . . . And cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary that is desolate.” Verses 16,17.

But why, it may be asked, would Daniel pray for a Jerusalem and a Sanctuary (Temple) which were then nonexistent? While it is true that in 586 B.C.E. Jerusalem and her Temple had been reduced to rubble by the Babylonians, and the place whereon they had stood was made desolate, yet in the purposes and plans of God for Israel they still existed. He had made this known long before in Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-4,13.

In fact, the vision given to Daniel in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, had made specific mention of the future of Jerusalem and its Sanctuary. Daniel 8:13. And that vision, as it relates to the cruelty of that “king of fierce countenance” symbolized by “the little horn which waxed exceeding great” (verses 9-13, 23-27), had given to the seer grounds for grave concern about his people’s future. Hence Daniel was searching the Holy Scriptures and earnestly praying for light from God concerning Israel’s role in the years ahead.

The God of Israel heard that fervent petition. The prophet says: “Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, the man *Gabriel*, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, approached close to me about the time of the evening offering. And he . . . said: ‘O, Daniel, I am now come forth to make thee skillful of understanding. . . . Therefore look into the word, and *understand the vision.*’” Daniel 9:21-23.

Daniel refers to this celestial visitor as “Gabriel, whom I had seen *in the vision* at the beginning,” and he bade the seer to “understand *the vision.*” What vision? Obviously it is the vision recorded in chapter 8, for there (in verses 16-18) is the only place where Gabriel is previously mentioned by name in the Bible. Dr. Judah J. Slotki, a Jewish scholar, in his commentary *Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah*, p. 76, has pointed out this

fact twice. Some writers have mistakenly supposed that Gabriel refers to Jeremiah's prophecies about the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, which Daniel had been studying. But note that Daniel speaks of him as "Gabriel, whom I [Daniel, not Jeremiah] had seen in the vision at the beginning." Verse 21.

The apparent reason why the angel directed the prophet's attention back to the vision recorded in chapter 8 was because he had not been able to explain all of it to Daniel at that previous time. In obedience to the command given to him, Gabriel had explained the vision in detail from verses 3 to 8, as can be seen in verses 20-23. But he did not do so in his explanation of the inimical little horn, which symbolized "a king of fierce countenance," as depicted in verses 9-13, 23-25. Gabriel had suddenly terminated his interpretation with this terse statement: "The vision of the evenings and mornings which hath been told [in verse 14] is true; but thou, shut thou up the vision; for it belongeth to many days to come." Verse 26. Why did he tell Daniel that? The reason given is: "*I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; then I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was appalled at the vision, but understood it not.*" Verse 27.

That is, Gabriel could not finish his explanation of the vision in chapter 8 because of the prophet's sudden illness. Hence he informed the seer that what remained to be explained was not of immediate importance because it related to the distant future. Nevertheless, Daniel was appalled by that vision, and knew that he had not adequately understood it. Gabriel knew that, too.

Some time passed thereafter, during which Daniel recovered from his illness and returned to the service of the king of Babylon. Later, the Babylonian kingdom was overthrown by the armies of the Medes and Persians. Now, in response to Daniel's earnest prayer to God, Gabriel returned to him to finish his explanation of the vision of Daniel 8.

At the close of the vision proper, a celestial being had inquired in the hearing of Daniel: "Until when (shall be) the vision [concerning] the continual ministration, and the desolating transgression, to give the sanctuary and the host to be trampled (under foot)?" Verse 13, as literally translated by the writer from the Hebrew text. Another heavenly being then answered: "Until two thousand and three hundred evening-mornings [days], and a sanctuary shall be cleansed." Verse 14, literal translation.

Gabriel, in his closing statement in verse 26, had briefly referred to that period of prophetic time, but without explaining it. Now, on his second visit, he began right at that point to present his additional explanation of the time period by saying:

"Seventy weeks have been cut off on behalf of thy people and on behalf of thy holy city, to halt the transgression, and to put an end to the sins; and to make atonement for guilt, and to bring in everlasting righteousness; and to seal the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the holy of holies.

"And know thou, and understand thou, (that) from the going forth of word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until Prince Messiah (shall be) seven weeks and threescore and two weeks; it shall be restored and rebuilt, (with) a broad place and a moat, even in the distress of the times.

"And after the threescore weeks and two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, and not for himself; and the people of the coming prince shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end of it (shall be) with an overflowing, and until the end of war desolations are determined.

"And he shall confirm a covenant with many one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause sacrifice and meal-offering to cease; and upon the wing of abominations (shall be) one making desolate; even until a consummation; and that which has been determined shall be poured out upon the one desolating." Daniel 9:24-27, literal translation.

That brief additional explanation given by Gabriel in Daniel 9 concerning the vision recorded in chapter 8 must have been read with much interest and even sadness by the Jews of that time and those in years to come. We need to read and understand it today. But before we discuss the time period of 70 prophetic weeks and when it began and ended, we will call attention to some highlights in that prophecy, as follows:

1. The shorter period of 70 prophetic weeks is said to be “cut off” (*chathak*) obviously from the longer period of 2300 evening-mornings (days) (Daniel 8:14) on behalf of Daniel’s people and their city—the Jews and Jerusalem. This special period of time *allotted to them* began at the end of their Babylonian captivity and would extend 490 years into the future for them to fulfill their God-given special mission to the world at large.

2. It was a renewal of the assurance that God had previously given to the exiled Jews that their Babylonian captivity would end and that Jerusalem and her Temple would be rebuilt. Not long after that supplementary explanation was given to Daniel by Gabriel, Cyrus the Great issued (in 537/536 B.C.E.) his famous edict granting freedom to all Jews to return to the Holy Land and rebuild the city and its sanctuary.²

3. It revealed also that Jerusalem and her sanctuary would be destroyed again by a mighty desolating power—this next time by the people of a prince who would come for that purpose. Daniel 9:26. The fulfillment of that prediction occurred in 70 C.E., when Titus, the princely son of Emperor Vespasian, and his Roman legions destroyed the city and its Second Temple. The fulfillment of that part of the prophecy which had said that this power would extend its dominion over “the beauteous land” (Daniel 8:9) occurred when Pompey and his Roman legions took Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E. and incorporated the Jewish commonwealth into the Roman Empire. This was the first time that a Roman army had set foot into the Holy Land.³

4. The first 69 of the 70 prophetic weeks of Daniel 9:24-27 would extend to the appearing of Israel's long expected Prince Messiah. It clearly and specifically says that he would be "cut off" (verse 26) in the midst of the 70th and last week of that allotted time (verse 27). The use of the Hebrew verb *karath* ("cut off") in its passive form and in the future tense here is particularly significant, for this indicates that at that time the Messiah's role would be that of the suffering servant of God, and not that of a king gloriously reigning on the throne of David over Israel and the rest of the world. That is, Messiah would be slain, as had been clearly foretold earlier in Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:1-12 and elsewhere in Holy Writ, but not for himself. He would suffer and die in behalf of others. The Targum to Isaiah 52:13 and 53:10 clearly and specifically identifies the suffering servant as the Messiah.

5. The prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 does not say exactly when Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed. Nothing is said therein to indicate that this calamity would occur at the end of the 70 prophetic weeks. It does reveal that this terrible event would take place *after* the Messiah had been "cut off," without stating how long thereafter the disaster would occur. It is a well known historical fact that both the city and the sanctuary were destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E.

Some of the Jewish sages of long ago were aware of the fact that the prophet Daniel did reveal the time when the Messiah would appear among the people of Israel. "R. Yudan said in the name of R. Eleazar bar Abina that the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed the time of redemption to two men, to Jacob and Daniel," etc.⁴

A tractate in the Babylonian Talmud taught concerning the Romans that "their reign will last till the coming of the Messiah."

The same Talmud reports a discussion among the sages in which one rabbi remarked concerning the destruction of the Temple: "Granted that they knew it would be destroyed, did they know when this would occur?"

“Abaye objected: And did they not know when? Is it not written, *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city* [Daniel IX. 24]?—All the same, did they know in which day?”⁶

In another Talmudic tractate there is this puzzling statement: “Rab also said: The son of David will not come until the wicked kingdom of Rome will have spread [its sway] over the whole world for nine months.”⁷

In the context of both of these instances, Rab cites the second part of the Messianic prophecy of Micah 5:1,2 as saying: “Therefore will He give them up until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth; then the residue of his brethren shall return with the children of Israel.”⁸ The editorial footnote no. 7 to the statement in Yoma 10a says that verse 2 was interpreted to mean “that the duration of the people’s abandonment will be ‘*until the time*, etc.,’ i.e., nine months, the period of pregnancy.”⁸ The significance of this is the fact that although Micah 5:1,2 makes no mention of Rome, yet Rab knew that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem while Rome held sway over Israel.

It is certain, therefore, that according to Daniel 9:24-27 Prince Messiah would appear, suffer, and die (be “cut off”) in Israel *before* the destruction of Jerusalem and the second Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E. Thus he would fulfill his redemptive role as God’s suffering servant.

Josephus—the Jewish priest, warrior, and historian who fought the Romans in the early part of the war of 66-70 C.E.—personally witnessed the burning of the Temple and the destruction of Jerusalem in the closing months of that military struggle. He affirms that “Daniel also wrote about the empire of the Romans and that Jerusalem would be taken by them and the temple laid waste.”⁹

The Book of Daniel was especially written for those of God’s people living in “the time of the end.” Daniel 12:4. Dr. Abba Hillel Silver has rightly pointed out that there was

ground for belief among Jews in the period “before 70 C.E.” that the time of the Messiah’s appearing had been divinely revealed. He says: “The Bible seemed to offer precedent and warrant for such an occupation. The Book of Daniel, the one canonized apocalyptic tract out of the many which were widely circulated and held in high regard by the people, dwelt upon the mystery of the ‘end of days’ and seemingly gave a clue to its solution.”¹⁰

Also Dr. Silver refers to that source as “the *locus classicus* of Messianic prophecy—the Book of Daniel.”¹¹

Dr. Joseph Klausner, a Jewish scholar who has written much on the history of the Messianic hope, has well said: “The one book of the Hagiographa in which the Messianic idea takes a large place is the Book of Daniel.”¹² He affirms that “almost all of Daniel is Messianic in spirit; but chapters 2, 6-9, and 12 are Messianic in essence.”¹³

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-4, 13; Jeremiah 25:8-11; 29:10-14; Ezra 1:1-4, 8; 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23.
2. Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-4; 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1-4.
3. Josephus, *Antiquities*, bk. 14, chap. 4, sect. 3 (HUP, vol. 7, pp. 479, 481).
4. *The Midrash on Psalms*, Psalm 31, sect. 7, vol. 1, p. 398. See also *Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis, chap. 98, sect. 2 (vol. 2, p. 947).
5. BT *Abodah Zarah* 2b, p. 4.
6. BT *Nazir* 32b, p. 118.
7. BT *Yoma* 10a, p. 44; *Sanhedrin* 98b, p. 665.
8. *Ibid.*, Footnotes.
9. Josephus, *Antiquities*, bk. 10, chap. 11, sect. 7 (HUP vol. 6, p. 311).
10. Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel*, p. 4.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
12. Dr. Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, p. 249.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 228.



A DAY FOR A YEAR

DANIEL did not forget that the vision given to him in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar, king of Babylon (Daniel 8:1) had not been fully explained by the angel Gabriel. He says of his recovery from his illness: "Then I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was appalled at the vision, but understood it not." Verse 27.

In the meantime Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and Persians in 539 B.C.E., and Darius the Mede was ruler over the Chaldeans by appointment of his nephew Cyrus the Great, king of Persia. Daniel 5:25-30; 6:1-4.

And the seer tells us that in the first year of Darius, "I Daniel meditated in the books, over the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem." Daniel 9:2. That is, he supposed that there might be some connection between the prophetic period of seventy years in Jeremiah 25:11,12; 29:10 and the prophetic period of 2300 days in Daniel 8:14. Besides, Gabriel had not yet explained that part of the vision which foretold the overthrow of the place of the sanctuary (Temple), and the cleansing of a sanctuary after the expiration of the 2,300 days. Verses 11-14.

With fasting Daniel sought the Lord in prayer for further light on the unexplained portion of the vision of chapter 8. He acknowledged that at that time Jerusalem and the sanctuary (Temple) lay in ruin and desolation, and that the Lord had permitted this to happen because of His people's sins and rebellion. Daniel 9:3-19.

While Daniel was praying, Gabriel appeared again and said: "I am come to declare it; . . . therefore look into the word, and understand the vision." Verse 23. What vision? That of chapter 8, the only one in which the prophet had seen that angel, whose explanation had been left unfinished because of the seer's sudden illness.

The angel Gabriel proceeded immediately to take up the vision of chapter 8 at the very point where he had left off when Daniel fainted. The heavenly messenger then said to him:

"Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to forgive iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal vision and prophet, and to anoint the most holy place." Daniel 9:24. In some translations the last part reads, "to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy" (Harkavy, Leeser, and others).

The Hebrew verb *chathak* rendered as "decreed" or "determined" in some translations of verse 24 literally means "are cut off" or "are severed" in the primary use of the term. But "cut off" from what? Obviously from the long period of 2,300 days ("evenings and mornings") of Daniel 8:14, which Gabriel had said "belongeth to many days to come." Verse 26. According to the angel, that period of seventy weeks was allocated to the distant future of the Hebrew people and to the city of Jerusalem for the purposes indicated in verse 24.

Bible scholars have long recognized that in symbolic prophecy a day is to be reckoned as one literal year. As in Daniel 2 and 7, so also in Daniel 8 we have a symbolic prophecy in which a ram, a goat, and several horns figure as symbolic representations of empires, lesser kingdoms, kings, etc. Hence the 70 symbolic weeks (or 490 days) of Daniel 9:24-27 are to be reckoned as 490 literal years.¹

In Ezekiel 4:1-8 we have a good illustration of the application of the year-for-a-day principle in the reckoning of time periods in the symbolic prophecies of the Holy Scriptures.

There Ezekiel was directed to use a piece of tile, an iron grid-dle, and a drawing of Jerusalem besieged by camps, forts, and mounts to represent the city's fate. The prophet was told to lie on his left side 390 days for the Kingdom of Israel, and on his right side 40 days for the Kingdom of Judah. The explanation given him by the Lord for Israel was: "According to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it, thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have appointed *the years of their iniquity to be unto thee a number of days*, even three hundred and ninety days." Verses 4, 5. He was told to "bear the iniquity of the house of Judah; forty days, *each day for a year*, have I appointed it unto thee." Verse 6. In fact, the Hebrew text literally reads, "a day for the year, a day for the year, I have given unto thee."

When the twelve spies returned from spying out the land of Canaan after spending 40 days there in the time of Moses, the majority report so discouraged the people that they rebelled against God's plan for them to move forward at that time to occupy the land. Then the Lord said:

"As for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years, and shall bear your strayings, until your carcasses be consumed in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye spied out the land, even forty days, *for every day a year*, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know My displeasure." Numbers 14:32-34.²

In the Babylonian Talmud we find an ancient rabbi quoting from Isaiah 63:4, with this interesting editorial footnote: "God's day of vengeance is a year, as in the case of the spies, on account of whom the Israelites were condemned to wander forty years in the wilderness,—a year for each day of their mission. Cf. Num. XIV. 34."³

Dr. Eduard König, in his discussion of Daniel 9:24-27, has repeatedly affirmed that the 70 weeks are to be interpreted as 70 "weeks of years."⁴

In the Babylonian Talmud, in the last Mishnah of Chapter 1 of the Tractate Makkoth, it is said that "a sanhedrin that effects an execution once in seven years, is branded a destructive tribunal."⁵ In Herbert Danby's translation of that Talmudic statement, the wording used is, "a week of years."⁶

In another tractate of the Babylonian Talmud there is a rabbinical discussion in which Daniel 9:27 is quoted. In the editorial footnote to that statement this explanation is given: "'One week' in Dan. IX means a week of years."⁷

In other instances the ancient rabbis used the term "septennate" in referring to a period of seven years. For example, we find them discussing "the seven year cycle at the end of which the son of David will come." After enumerating the years and what will happen in each of them, they conclude by saying: "At the conclusion of the septennate the son of David will come."⁸

In another Talmudic tractate the rabbis of long ago mention "the seven-year cycle in which the son of David will come," and they conclude that, "at the expiration of the septennate the son of David will come."⁹

In another rabbinical work mention is made of "the septennate in which the scion of David will come," affirming that in "the seventh year the scion of David will come."¹⁰

Another ancient rabbinical treatise mentions "the seven-year period preceding the arrival of the Messiah."¹¹

Thus the application of the year-for-a-day principle to the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24-27 has a sound basis in the Biblical text and also in Talmudic interpretation.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See Judah J. Slotki, *Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah*, p. 77.
2. See also BT *Hagigah* 5b, p. 25, Soncino ed.; *Midrash Rabbah* on Numbers, chap. 16, sect. 11; and the Targum of Onkelos, sect. 37, chap. 14.
3. BT *Sanhedrin* 99a, p. 670, Footnote no. 1.
4. See *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, pp. 431, 432, art. "Daniel."
5. BT *Makkoth* 7a, p. 35.

6. *The Mishnah*, translated by Herbert Danby, p. 403.
7. BT *Yoma* 54a, p. 254, footnote no. 6. See also *Midrash Rabbah* to Lamentations, chap. 34, p. 65, Footnote no. 3.
8. BT *Sanhedrin* 97a, p. 654.
9. MTT *Derek 'Eretz Zuta*, chap. 10, part 1, vol. 2, p. 593.
10. *Midrash Rabbah* to Song of Songs, chap. 2, sect. 13, p. 126.
11. *Pesikta Rabbati*, Piska 34, sect. 1 (vol. 2, p. 664). See also Piska 36, sect. 1, (vol. 2, p. 679).



MESSIAH “ANOINTED”

THE DEPORTATION of Jews from the Kingdom of Judah in Palestine to exile in Babylonia by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, began when he captured Jerusalem in 605 B.C.E. God permitted this because of the persistent and increasing apostasy of the vast majority of the people and leaders of the Kingdom of Judah. 2 Kings 24:1-16; 2 Chron. 36:5-8. The Lord declared that the period of exile would be 70 years, and that at the end of it the people would be permitted to return to their homeland to rebuild Jerusalem and its Temple. Jeremiah 25:1, 9-13; 29:1-14; 30:1-3. In fact, the Lord told them long beforehand that Cyrus, king of Persia, would initiate by royal decree their return for that purpose. Isaiah 44:26-28; 45:1-4, 13. And when the 70-year period of exile expired in 536 B.C.E., King Cyrus the Great of Persia issued the promised edict. Ezra 1:1-4; 4:3; 5:13; 6:1-5; 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23.

In the year before Cyrus issued that decree the Lord gave to His people the important prophetic message in Daniel 9:24-27. Daniel, the Hebrew seer among the exiles at that time, was studying Jeremiah's prophecies concerning the return of the exiles to their homeland at the end of the 70 years of captivity. The seer earnestly prayed God to forgive His people their sins and restore to them their city and the Temple. Daniel 9:1-23.

In Daniel 9:24-27 the Lord presented to His chosen people a message of solemn warning and precious promise. Literally rendered, it begins: “Seventy weeks have been cut off on behalf of thy people and on behalf of thy holy city.” Verse 24. So that message promised to them another period of

probation, and opportunity to fulfill His purpose for them. The Hebrew verb *chathak*, which we have rendered literally as “have been cut off,” is translated as “are determined,” or as “are decreed,” in several English versions. It is here used in the Niph'al (passive) form and the preterit (past) tense, and is not employed elsewhere in our Hebrew Bible.

That special period of seventy symbolic weeks of future probation was given to God's people in order that among them transgression might be halted, that an end might be put to sin, that atonement might be made for guilt, and that righteousness might be brought in to take the place of transgression. Does the expression “seventy weeks” mean a period of only 490 literal days? The Hebrew word rendered as “week” in the English text of Daniel 9:24-27 is *shebu'a*. In all the 22 instances of its use in the Bible it refers to time, and in 21 of them it is rendered as “week” in the English versions. The ancient Greek translation rendered it as *hebdomad*. The noun *shebu'a* is akin to, but not identically the same as, the Hebrew terms *sheba'* and *sheb'ah*, which are rendered into English as “seven.”

Ancient and modern Jewish expositors have interpreted the words “seventy weeks” to mean seventy symbolic weeks of years, i.e., a period of 490 literal years ($70 \times 7 = 490$). This is in harmony with the Biblical principle that in symbolic prophecy one symbolic day equals a year of literal time. (See chapter 8.)

When did the prophetic period of 70 weeks, or 490 years, of Daniel 9:24-27 begin and end? That prophecy itself provides the answer to this question. The angel Gabriel revealed it very clearly in these words which he spoke to Daniel, saying: “From the going forth of word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until Prince Messiah (shall be) seven weeks and threescore and two weeks; it shall be restored and rebuilt, (with) a broad place and a moat, even in the distress of the times.” Verse 25, literal rendering.

According to that verse, the period of 70 symbolic weeks—or 490 literal years—is to be reckoned “from the going forth of word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem.” In Alexander Harkavy’s translation that passage says: “From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.”

Our next question is, When did the “word” or “commandment” go forth “to restore and to build Jerusalem,” which had been reduced to ruins and desolation by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E.?

As had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah more than 100 years before this time, Cyrus I, king of Persia (539-530 B.C.E.), issued in 536 B.C.E. his historic decree granting all Jewish exiles freedom to return to their homeland and to rebuild Jerusalem and its Temple. Isaiah 44:28; 2 Chronicles 36:22; Ezra 1:1-4.

A large number of Jews then living in exile returned to the land of Israel in the following year under the leadership of Zerubbabel as their governor and Joshua as their high priest. First, they built in Jerusalem an altar on which to offer sacrifices unto God. Ezra 3:2-6. The foundation of the Second Temple was laid in the following year. Verses 8-10.

However, during the major part of the next two decades local wars and internal political strife so occupied the Persian government that neighboring enemies of the Jews at Jerusalem took advantage of it “to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.” See Ezra 4:1-5, Harkavy’s translation. Indeed, the work of building the new Temple in Jerusalem was stopped till the second year of Darius I (Hystaspes)—i.e., about 519 B.C.E. See Ezra 5. By a decree of that Persian monarch the work was soon resumed (Ezra 6:1-14) and finally finished on Adar 3 in 515 B.C.E. Verse 15.

But the work of rebuilding and restoring Jerusalem by the Jewish exiles returned from their Babylonian captivity was not completed until a third royal edict—that issued by Artaxerxes

I, king of Persia, in the seventh year of his reign—made it possible. In the autumn of 457 B.C.E. (see Appendix, “Autumn to Autumn,” pp. 94-107) he issued a decree which authorized Ezra to take a large company of exiled priests and laymen to Jerusalem. Ezra was instructed to give the people the guidance and help needed to complete the work of restoration there. See Ezra 7:7-26.

In the months that followed Ezra and his associates were enabled by the Lord to bring about a great religious revival and reformation among His people. Hence it is written that “they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the decree of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.” Ezra 6:14.

Thus the period of “seventy weeks” (or 490 years) of Daniel 9:24-27 began in the *autumn of 457 B.C.E.*, when the last and final of the three decrees issued by Cyrus the Great, Darius I, and Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) became effective. Reckoned from that date, the 490-year period ended in the *autumn of 34 C.E.* At this time the specially allotted period of probation for God’s chosen people as a theocracy ended, although the predicted destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple was delayed by divine mercy until 70 C.E.

The prophecy says specifically that “from the going forth of word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until Prince Messiah (shall be) seven weeks and threescore and two weeks.” Verse 25, literal translation. That is, at the end of the first 69 weeks of the 70-week period Prince Messiah would appear. Reckoning those 483 years ($7 + 60 + 2 = 69$ and $69 \times 7 = 483$) from the autumn of 457 B.C.E., we find that the time when Prince Messiah would appear was the autumn of 27 C.E. At that time his public ministry would begin in the land of Israel.

However, it should be noted that in 27 C.E. Prince Messiah would not appear in his role as a ruling monarch to occupy the throne of King David and reign eternally over God’s

people. Daniel 9:24-27 says nothing whatever concerning the Messiah as a king. But it does make it very clear that he would appear and be "cut off" as Israel's Suffering Messiah *before* the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in 70 C.E.

It is recorded that the public ministry of Jesus (born in 4 B.C.E.) as the Messiah in Israel began when at the age of 30 he was ritually immersed (baptized) in the Jordan River by John the Baptist in the autumn of 27 C.E., in the fifteenth year of the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar. Luke 3:1-3, 21-23. At that time John the Baptist presented him to the people with this announcement: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29.

Thus he was proclaimed as Israel's Suffering Messiah, who had been represented by the typical sin offering consisting of slaughtered lambs offered for the atonement of the sins of the penitent from the time of Adam. Genesis 3:21; 4:4.

We wonder if John the Baptist, the great Jewish prophet and preacher, had in mind Isaiah's prophecy concerning the Suffering Messiah' when he made that public announcement: "As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb, he opened not his mouth." Isaiah 53:7.

We have noted above that the public ministry of Jesus as the Messiah began "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." Luke 3:1. This poses a problem for some students of the Holy Scriptures. They think of the reign of Tiberius as beginning immediately after the death of Augustus Caesar on August 19 of 14 C.E. The historical record clearly states concerning Augustus Caesar:

"He died in the same room as his father Octavius, in the consulship of two Sextuses, Pompeius and Appuleius, on the fourteenth day before the Kalends of September [the 19th of August] at the ninth hour, just thirty-five days before his seventy-sixth birthday."

Velleius Paterculus, a high-ranking Roman military officer personally acquainted with Augustus, gives the date of the emperor's

death as taking place “in the seventy-sixth year of his age, and in the consulate of Pompey and Apuleius.”³

Historical records show that Tiberius Caesar, the adopted son of Augustus Caesar, *began to reign with Augustus as his colleague a year before* his father Augustus died on August 19, 14 C.E. For example, Veleius Paterculus recorded concerning Tiberius:

“After the senate and people of Rome, on a request being made by his father [Augustus], that he might be invested with authority equal to his own in all the provinces and armies, had passed a decree to that effect (for it would indeed have been unreasonable, if what he had secured should not be under his command, and if he, who was the first to bring succor, should not be thought entitled to a share of honor), he returned to Rome and celebrated his triumph over Pannonia and Dalmatia, which had been long due to him, but had been deferred on account of the continuance of the wars.”⁴

That statement was written by a man who served as a cavalry general, as did also his brother, in the army of Tiberius during the many wars and battles that he fought for Rome.⁵

“In A.D. 13 Augustus, who had then reached his 75th year, again took the government of the empire for ten years longer; but he threw some part of the burden upon his adopted son and successor, Tiberius, *by making him his colleague.*”⁶

Reckoning, therefore, the last year of the reign of Augustus Caesar as the first year of the reign of Tiberius as his colleague (13 C.E.), his fifteenth year would begin in the autumn of 27 and end in the autumn of 28 C.E. (13 plus 14 years that Tiberius had already reigned, equal 27 C.E., when his 15th year began.)

So Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the autumn of 27 C.E., was then anointed by a remarkable descent of the Holy Spirit upon him, and was presented to the people of Israel by a voice from heaven saying: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:16, 17.

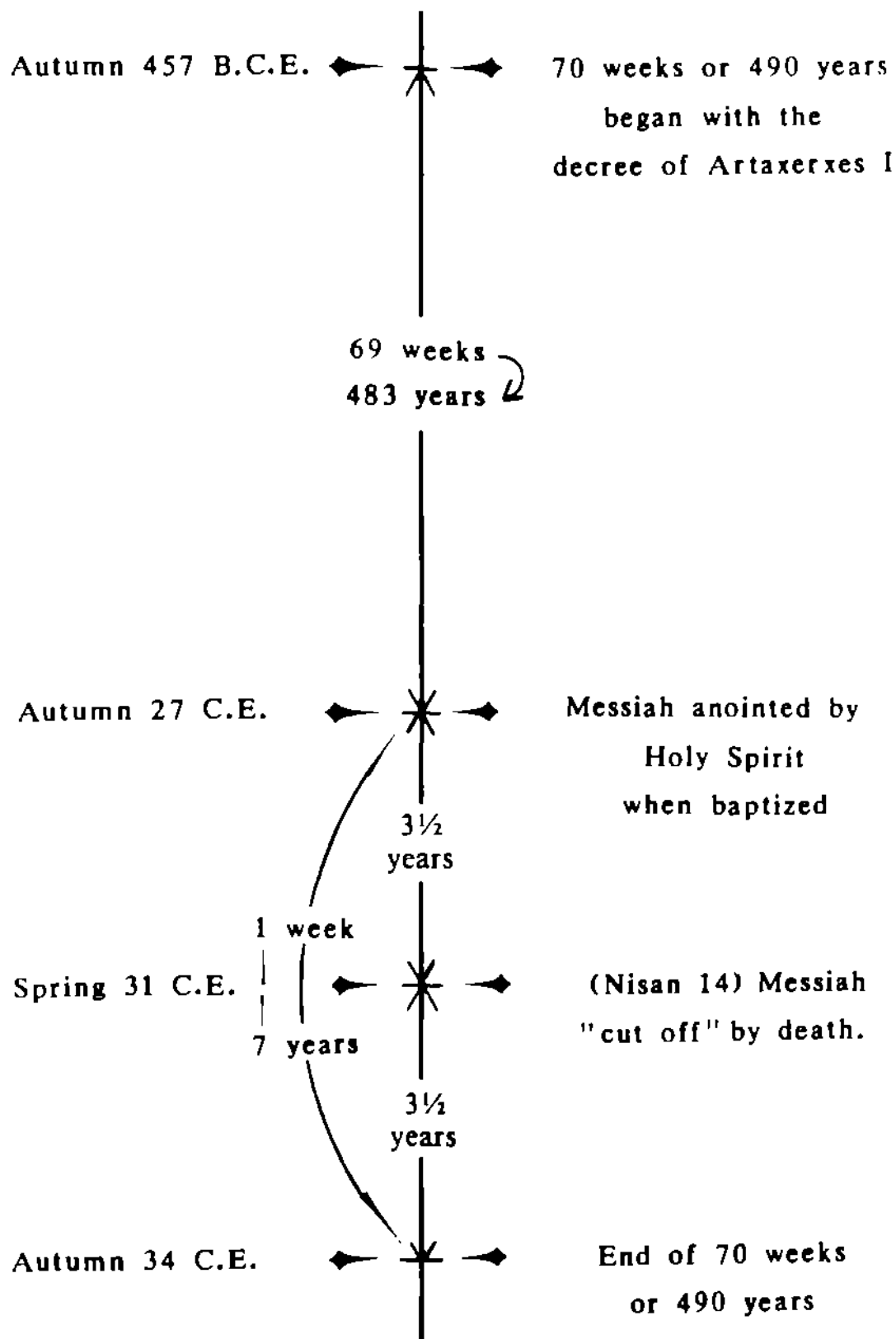
Thus, in fulfillment of the sacred prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27, our long-expected Suffering Messiah began his public ministry in Israel on time in the autumn of 27 C.E., which marked the commencement of the 70th week of the 490-year period. At this time he was introduced to the people of Israel as our Suffering Messiah when John the Baptist publicly said of him: "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See J.F. Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah*, Isaiah 52:13 and 53:10, pages 178 and 180.
2. Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, "Augustus," chap. 100 (Loeb Classical Library, vol. 1, pp. 281, 283).
3. Valleius Paterculus, *Compendium of Roman History*, bk. 2, chap. 123, p. 516. See also Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, bk. 56, chap. 30, sect. 1 (LCL vol. 7, p. 69); Josephus, *Antiquities*, bk. 18, chap. 2, sect. 2 (HUP vol. 9, p. 29); *War*, bk. 2, chap. 9, sect. 1 (HUP vol. 2, pp. 387-389); *Encyclopedia Britannica* (11th ed.), vol. 2, p. 914, art. "Augustus I."
4. Velleius Paterculus, *op. cit.* p. 515.
5. *Ibid.*, bk. 2, chaps. 104, 111, 113, 121, 124.
6. DGRB, vol. 1, p. 429, col. 2, art. "Augustus;" vol. 3, p. 1118, col. 2, art. "Tiberius."



70 SYMBOLIC WEEKS = 490 LITERAL YEARS



MESSIAH "CUT OFF"

IT HAD been revealed in Holy Writ that the Messiah would appear in Israel *first as God's suffering servant*. Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:1-12. This fact has long been recognized by Jewish sages. In coming as such, Messiah the Prince would not *then* sit on David's throne and reign as king over his people. God's plan for Israel was that this prophetic period of 490 literal years represented by the 70 symbolic weeks of Daniel 9:24-27 should culminate for His people and the Holy City in events designed "to finish the transgression, and to make a remedy for sins, and to atone for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the holy of holies." Verse 24, literally translated.

That prophecy states that in the 70th and last week—that is, the seven years from the autumn of 27 to the autumn of 34 C.E.—"shall be cut off the Messiah, but not for himself." Verse 26, literal translation.

The prophecy literally states also that "he shall confirm a covenant for many one week, and *in the midst of the week he shall cause to cease the sacrifice and the offering*." Verse 27. Note that this would occur "in the midst of the week" of years—that is, midway between the autumn of 27 C.E. and the autumn of 34 C.E.—which was the spring of the year 31 C.E. So the Messiah would fulfill his role as God's suffering servant by being "cut off" from among the living by death in the spring of 31 C.E. (Autumn of 27 plus 3½ years brings us to the spring of 31 C.E.)

Those Jews and Gentiles who believe that King David's scion born in Bethlehem, as foretold in Micah 5:1,¹ was Israel's promised Messiah, will be interested in the fact that the Babylonian Talmud has preserved this record of his death:

“On the eve of the Passover [Nisan 14] Yeshu was hanged. . . . But since nothing was brought forward in his favor, he was hanged on the eve of the Passover!”² Editorial footnote no. 6 to that statement says: “Ms. M. adds ‘the Nazarean.’” And footnote no. 7 remarks: “A Florentine Ms. adds: ‘and the eve of Sabbath,’” which was the sixth day of the week (Friday).³

He was “hanged” by crucifixion. “His hands and feet were fastened with nails to the cross-beam and stake.”⁴

That remarkable bit of history preserved by the ancient Jewish sages fully agrees with the earliest records of the death of Jesus (Y’shua) as the Messiah. In them the Jewish Christian writers of that time have recorded the fact that he was crucified on the day called “the preparation of the Passover.” John 19:14. That was Nisan 14. Another record states that his accusers would not enter the judgment hall to denounce Jesus (Y’shua) before Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator in Judea, lest they should “be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover.” John 18:28.

Another record states: “That day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.” Luke 23:54. Yet another writer says: “It was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath.” Mark 15:42.

It is remarkable that after almost 2000 years the records of the death of Y’shua as preserved by Jews who had accepted him as the Messiah and by those who had not accepted him as such are in agreement concerning the time of his death!⁵

It was not for himself that the Messiah, as God’s suffering servant should be “cut off” by death. The Hebrew verb *karath*, rendered as “cut off” in Daniel 9:26, means to slay or kill.⁶ It is employed in its niph’al form nearly 60 times in our Hebrew text of the Holy Scriptures in reference to putting persons to death by cutting them off from among the living. Thus it was foretold that Israel’s promised Messiah would be slain, “but not for himself,” as the Hebrew text literally

says. He would die to pay the penalty for sin and thus make possible the salvation of the truly penitent who accept him as the promised redeemer. The ancient targum to Isaiah 52:13 and 53:10 expressly speaks of the suffering servant as the Messiah.

That very same prophecy of Isaiah clearly says concerning him: "He was wounded because of our transgressions, he was crushed because of our iniquities;" verse 5. Also in verse 8: "He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due."

Thus the God of Israel, through His prophet Isaiah (in the eighth century B.C.E.), clearly told His people Israel that our promised Messiah would be slain—"cut off"—to atone for the sins of the truly penitent who would accept him as their saviour from the death penalty incurred by their transgressions of His law.

But why was it necessary for him to die? Because the penalty for sin is death.⁷ All of us have sinned.⁸ Therefore all have come under condemnation. "For there is not a righteous man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." Ecclesiastes 7:20. For the impenitent, this penalty will be the second and eternal death which they will receive in the day of final judgment, and from it there will be no resurrection.

So we, all of us, need a Saviour. The Sacred Scriptures have made it very clear that "he was wounded because of *our* transgressions, he was crushed because of *our* iniquities" Isaiah 53:5. Messiah, as the sinless one, voluntarily paid the death penalty for us penitent sinners by the vicarious sacrifice of himself in our behalf to make atonement for our guilt.

That is, it was not for any wrongdoing on his part that the Suffering Messiah should die. But "because he bared his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Verse 12.

Of special interest is the fact that it was foretold that after the Messiah should be cut off, *the sacrifice and offering would cease.*

Daniel 9:26. Hosea, another Hebrew prophet, had said earlier (in the eighth century B.C.E.) that “the children of Israel shall sit solitary many days without king, and without prince, and *without sacrifice*, and without pillar, and *without ephod* or teraphim; afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall come trembling unto the Lord and to His goodness in the end of days.” Hosea 3:4, 5. The expressions “without sacrifice” and “without ephod” (a priestly vestment) indicated that for many days Israel would be deprived of the benefits of the sacrificial services and the priestly ministries of the Temple. This has been true for 19 centuries, ever since the Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. by the Romans.

It is said further concerning the Messiah that “he shall confirm a covenant with many one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause sacrifice and meal-offering to cease.” Daniel 9:27, literal translation. The “one week” referred to here is the seventieth and last one of the 70 in the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. This seven-year period began in the autumn of the year 27 and ended in the autumn of the year 34 C.E.

What covenant? Undoubtedly the “new covenant” mentioned in the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34, which declares it to be superior to the one which God made with Israel as a nation when He brought them out of the bondage of Egypt. Under the new covenant He would write His law, not only on tables of stone, but “in their inward parts, and in their heart.” And that new covenant contains this promise of the Lord: “I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.”

Note that this new covenant is one that God Himself makes with His people *as individuals* and not as a nation. Under this covenant the Lord wishes to write His law in each person’s heart in order that it may regulate and govern his thoughts, his feelings, and his conduct. We must fully submit ourselves to Him, and even invite Him to do that wonderful thing for us individually, for He will not force us to submit to Him.

Every penitent soul ought to pray God to do this for him. See Psalm 51:12 where David prayed: "Create me a clean heart, O God; and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

This covenant would be confirmed with many—the truly repentant—by the Messiah's giving himself "to make atonement for guilt."

It was said concerning the Messiah that "*in the midst of the week* he shall cause sacrifice and meal-offering to cease." Daniel 9:27, literal translation. The "midst of the week" in the 70th week of years was in the spring of 31 C.E., the midway point between the autumn of 27 and the autumn of 34 C.E. This was the date when the Messiah was "cut off"—put to death—as foretold in verse 26. The symbolic and typical sacrificial offerings would no longer have validity and prophetic significance after the real Messianic sacrifice they represented and foreshadowed had occurred.

Many, many centuries ago our Jewish teachers taught: "In the Messianic time all sacrifices except the thank-offering will cease (Pes. 79a; Lev. R. ix., xxvii)."⁹

"In the Time to Come all offerings will be abolished."¹⁰

"In the Time to Come all sacrifices will be annulled."¹¹

"In the time-to-come all offerings will cease, except the thank-offering: this will never cease."¹²

"After the destruction of Jerusalem [in 70 C.E.] all the special laws of Palestine became obsolete according to the strict interpretation of the Mosaic law, but the Rabbis, desiring to maintain some distinction between the Holy Land and the rest of the world, and for other reasons stated below, kept in force some of the special laws. These are recognized as 'mi-de-Rabbanan' (by virtue of the Rabbis) in contradistinction to 'mi-de-Oraita' (by virtue of the Mosaic law)."¹³

That is, after the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E., the abolition of the priesthood, and the cessation of the sacrificial services, some of Israel's religious leaders took over and attempted by man-made liturgies and precepts to fill the vacuum created in the spiritual life of the majority of Jews.

The fulfillment of the prediction that “the people of the coming prince shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end of it (shall be) with an overflowing, and until the end of the war desolations are determined” (Daniel 9:26, literal translation), occurred in 70 C.E. Then the Roman armies under the command of Titus, princely son of Emperor Vespasian, destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. Daniel 9:24-27 does not place this calamity within the 490-year period, but speaks of it as a sequel subsequent to it.

It has already been pointed out in this chapter that according to that prophecy Messiah the prince would be “cut off” in the midst of the week—in the spring of 31 C.E.—and *before* the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem and its Sanctuary (Temple) in 70 C.E. In this connection it is interesting to note this item recorded in the Babylonian Talmud:

*“Forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the Sanhedrin were exiled and took up residence in Hanuth.”*¹⁴

*“Forty years before the destruction of the Temple the Sanhedrin went into exile and took its seat in the Trade Halls.”*¹⁵

Also: *“Forty years before the Temple was destroyed did the Sanhedrin abandon [the Temple] and held its sittings in Hanuth.”*¹⁶

The Mishnah in *Sanhedrin* 86b and in other places states that until then the Sanhedrin was accustomed to meet in the Hall of Hewn Stones, a chamber built in the style of a large basilica,¹⁷ on a site close to the Temple.

After their banishment, “They did not try capital charges.”¹⁸ Editorial footnote no. 7 explains further that the *Jerusalem Sanhedrin* 1. i, says plainly that “the right to try capital cases was taken away from them.”¹⁹

“Capital cases were only dealt with by any court of 23 while the Sanhedrin sat in the Hewn-Stone Chamber of the Temple; the abandoning of their seat therefore meant the cessation of judging capital cases.”²⁰ And where *Sanhedrin* 41a

speaks of certain other serious offenses, we are told: "These, like capital charges, could be tried only in the chief seat of the Sanhedrin—the Hall of Hewn Stones!"²¹

Thus it was that "in criminal law, involving capital punishment, the right to administer which had been taken from the Sanhedrin decades before the fall of Jerusalem (Sanh. 41a; Yer. Sanh. i. 18a, vii. 24b), the Rabbis delved deeply, elaborating the details thereof with a view to their application in the hoped-for Messianic days."²²

Thus a scholarly Jewish evaluation of the historical data on that point is that "penal jurisdiction had been taken from the Sanhedrin in capital cases 'forty years before the fall of the Temple.'"²³

Note that this happened *forty years before the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E.*, which means that this forty-year period (by the inclusive reckoning used in those days) began in 31 C.E. In other words, that 40-year period began with the year in which Jesus, who claimed to be the promised Messiah and whom many in Israel accepted as such, was "cut off"—put to death—as foretold in Daniel 9:26, in the spring, on Nisan 14, of 31 C.E. A remarkable coincidence, indeed!

The Messiah's death as the suffering servant of God marked the cessation of the sacrifice and oblation as an essential part of true worship in the eyes of the God of Israel. The destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. put a stop to the physical act of offering the symbolic animal sacrifices. Josephus, who personally witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem, says that "on that day—it was the seventeenth of Panemus—the so-called continual sacrifice had for lack of men ceased to be offered to God."²⁴ The Temple was destroyed by fire on Lous (Ab) 10, and the city fell to the Romans on Gorpheus 8.²⁵ In the Jewish calendar the corresponding dates—Tammuz 17 and Ab 10—were long observed in succeeding centuries as days of fasting and mourning.

Post Biblical sages have repeatedly declared that the time would come when all sacrifices would be annulled, and that study of the laws concerning them would cease. The widely used book of *Daily Prayers*, with an English translation by Dr. A. Th. Philips, mournfully acknowledges that “at present, on account of our sins, the Temple is laid waste, and the daily sacrifice [*hat-tamid*] hath ceased; for we have neither an officiating priest, nor a Levite on the desk, nor an Israelite at his station.”²⁶

The calamitous war of 66 to 70 C.E. was the climactic result of a trend that began long before the spring of 31 C.E., the time when Prince Messiah would “be cut off, and not for himself.” One of our Jewish scholars has called attention to “the people’s moral and spiritual deterioration, that was gradually on the increase, until forty years before the destruction of the Second Temple.”²⁷

And another such writer comments on the sad climax—the war of 66 to 70 C.E.—saying: “The city, however, was doomed to destruction, partly because of the dissensions among its inhabitants and partly because of the exactions of the Roman procurators. . . . The war party, the parties of Simon [son of Gioras] and of John of Giscala, the Idumeans, and the peace party rent the city in pieces. Simon held the upper and lower cities; John, the Temple and Ophel; and they did as much destruction from within as the Romans did from without.”²⁸

When we consider Daniel 9:24-27 in the light of the Messiah’s role as God’s suffering servant, we can see that the Jewish scholar, Dr. Joseph Klausner, had ample grounds for commenting thus on Isaiah 53:

“These verses, so difficult of interpretation, it was easy to apply to the crucified Messiah.”²⁹ Too, there is his reluctant admission concerning the crucified Yeshua’, that “some of his career did resemble what is described in [Isaiah] Chapter 53.”³⁰

Many in Israel during the first three centuries of the Common Era eagerly cherished the expectation that Messiah ben David would appear soon to throw off the galling yoke of Roman dominion and reign gloriously upon King David's throne. Thus political desire and hope seemed inconsistent and incompatible with the Biblical prophecies that he must come first as God's suffering servant in behalf of His people, and that at a much later time—"in the end of days" (Hosea 3:5)—he would come to establish and to reign over his everlasting and universal kingdom on earth. If this *dual* role of the Messiah had been generally accepted by Israel's sages of long ago, the Judaeo-Christian movement in Israel probably would have taken a somewhat different course than it has, and the many false messianic movements among the Jews thereafter³¹ probably would not have marred the annals of history.

Both Jews and Christians would do well to study anew the Biblical concept of the Messiah as it was taught in the Holy Scriptures in the period prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 C.E.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See Matthew 2:1-8; Luke 2:4,11.
2. BT *Sanhedrin* 43a, p. 281, Soncino edition.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, p. 373, col. 1, art. "Crucifixion."
5. For the records of his death see: Matthew 27:1-60; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19. Matthew and John were his disciples and actually witnessed his death.
6. Genesis 9:11; 17:14; Psalms 37:9, 28, 34, 38; Proverbs 2:22; Jeremiah 11:19; Obadiah 9; 1 Samuel 17:51; 31:9.
7. Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Psalm 37:9,10,20,22,38.
8. 1 Kings 8:46.
9. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, p. 622, art. "Sacrifices." The reference to Lev. R. cited in this quotation should be ix. vii, and *not* xxvii.
10. *Midrash Rabbah* to Leviticus, chap. 27, sect. 12 (p. 357 Soncino ed.).
11. *Ibid.*, chap. 9, sect. 7 (p. 114).
12. *The Midrash on Psalms*, Psalm 100, sect. 4 (vol. 2, p. 148 of Wm. Braude's translation).
13. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, p. 503, art. "Palestine, Holiness of."

14. BT *Sanhedrin* 41a (p. 267, Soncino ed.). See also *Rosh Hashanah* 31a & b, p. 149.
15. BT *Shabbath* 15a (p. 63, Soncino ed.). Footnote no. 2 says: "A place on the Temple Mount."
16. BT *Abodah Zarah* 8b (p. 40, Soncino ed.).
17. BT *Yoma* 25a, (pp. 114, 115, Soncino ed.).
18. BT *Sanhedrin* 41a (p. 267).
19. *Ibid.*
20. Editorial footnote no. 2 to 'Abodah Zarah 8b, p. 42.
21. BT *Sanhedrin* 41a (p. 267). Footnote no. 6.
22. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, pp. 447, 448, art. "Capital Punishment."
23. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 374, art. "Crucifixion."
24. Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, bk. 6, chap. 2, sect. 1 (HUP vol. 3, p. 403).
25. *Ibid.*, chap. 4, sect. 5; chap. 8, sect. 5; chap. 10, sect. 1 (HUP vol. 3, pp. 447, 449, 495).
26. Dr. A. Th. Philips, *Daily Prayers*, Revised edition, p. 41.
27. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, p. 367, art. "Azazel."
28. *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 127, col. 2, art. "Jerusalem." See also Josephus, *Wars*, bk. 5, chaps. 1-3, 6, and 10.
29. Joseph Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul*, p. 267.
30. Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, p. 162.
31. See Abba Hillel Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel From the Fourth Through the Seventeenth Centuries*.



THE SUFFERING MESSIAH

AFTER A careful and prayerful study of Israel's Messianic hope as it was set forth by Moses and the other Hebrew prophets in the Sacred Scriptures, and also significant comments made by later Jewish teachers on these Bible prophecies, we agree with the following statement:

"The idea of a personal Messiah had become so deeply rooted in the consciousness of the people that it is taken for granted throughout rabbinic literature."

However, having considered the Messiah as the preeminent son and ultimate heir to the throne of King David, and noting that as such he will reign over the universal and everlasting kingdom which God ultimately will establish upon the earth, we now consider the promised Messiah's role as the suffering servant of God.

For example, we note this prediction spoken by God to the adversary soon after Adam and Eve were enticed into sin:

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and *thou shalt bruise his heel.*" Genesis 3:15, Harkavy's translation.

That prophecy foretold that there would appear among the descendants of Eve a son who would conquer the adversary and thus put an end to his reign of sin. In doing this, the promised deliverer would be wounded—that is, he would be also a suffering servant of God. Both the Targum of Palestine (that ascribed to Jonathan ben Uzziel) and the Targum of Jerusalem, anciently penned in Aramaic, say that this prophecy of Genesis 3:15 would be fulfilled "in the days of the king Meshiha [Messiah]."

In the second year of the reign of King Darius Hystaspes of Persia (522-486 B.C.E.) (Zechariah 1:1) the Lord said to the Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto Me *because they have thrust him through*; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Zechariah 12:10.

To what person is reference made by the words "they have thrust him through"? One explanation set forth by the Jewish sages in the Babylonian Talmud was that "the cause is the slaying of Messiah the son of Joseph, since that well agrees with the Scriptural verse, *And they shall look upon me because they have thrust him through, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son* [Zech. XII, 10]."²

The strange thing about that interpretation is that it applies the prophecy to "Messiah the son of Joseph." Why did they do this? The name "Joseph" is not used once in the book of Zechariah, and this prophecy of Zechariah specifically relates to the tribe of "Judah," "the house of David," and "the inhabitants of Jerusalem." Verses 7-12. Besides, the Sacred Writings nowhere foretold the birth of a Messiah who would be a descendant of Joseph's favorite son Ephraim.

The concept of a "Messiah the son of Joseph" has been traced back as far as the time of R. Dosa (about 250 C.E.). "When and how this Messiah conception originated is a question that has not yet been answered satisfactorily."³

Could it be because so many in Israel during the first three centuries of the Common Era eagerly cherished the expectation that Messiah ben David would appear soon to throw off the Roman yoke of domination and reign gloriously upon King David's throne? Did this hope make it seem inconsistent and incompatible to think of him as the suffering servant of God? Since the Holy Scriptures had foretold the sufferings of the Messiah, some interpreters supposed that there would be *two*

different and distinct Messiahs: (1) Messiah the son of Joseph, who would suffer and die as a martyr, and (2) Messiah the son of David, who would subdue Israel's enemies and reign gloriously on the Davidic throne forever thereafter.

It is certain that some rabbis found it difficult to identify the Messiah foretold in Daniel as the Messiah foretold by Zechariah:

“R. Alexander said: R. Joshua opposed two verses: it is written, *And behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven* [Dan. VII, 13]; whilst [elsewhere] it is written, [*behold, thy king cometh unto thee . . .*] *lowly, and riding upon an ass!* [Zech. IX, 7].”⁴

It is equally true that Jewish sages of long ago did think of the Messiah as being preeminently the servant of God spoken of by the prophet Isaiah. For example, we read: “Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He.” Isaiah 43:10. The Targum to Isaiah explains this prophecy thus: “Ye are witnesses before Me, saith the Lord, and My servant the Anointed One [or Messiah], in whom I am well pleased; that ye may know and believe before Me, and understand that I am He.”

Furthermore, we are told today this about that part of the Book of Isaiah: “Ch. xl-lxvi are often called ‘The Prophecy of Restoration’ and yet it requires no great cleverness to see that these twenty-seven chapters are full of variety in tone and style and historical background. A suggestion of this variety may be presented by giving a table of contents.”⁵

The table there presented lists thirty-three items, No. 19 of which reads: “The martyrdom of the true servant of the Lord, and his subsequent exaltation (lii. 13-liii. 12).”⁶

Aware of the fact that some teachers would have us suppose that Israel as a people is the suffering servant of God foretold in those prophecies of Isaiah, the same Jewish reference work plainly tells us this:

“There are, however, four passages in the Isaian compilation where perhaps the ‘national’ interpretation is not admissible, namely, Isa. xlii. 1-4, xlix. 1-6, l. 4-9, lii. 13-liii. 12. The descriptions in them of the attitude and conduct of the ‘ebed YHWH seem to be idealizations of the character of an individual rather than of the whole of Israel. Especially is this true of Isa. lii. 13-liii. 12, the exaltation of the ‘man of suffering.’ In this a prophetic anticipatory picture of the Messiah has been recognized by both Jewish and Christian tradition.”⁷

The tractate *Sanhedrin* 98b of the Babylonian Talmud reports that when a group of the Jewish sages were discussing the various names of the Messiah, the rabbis declared that Isaiah 53:4 referred specifically to him as the smitten one.⁸

Too, there is this ancient Jewish comment on Ruth 2:14, which definitely applies Isaiah 53:5 to the Messiah: “The fifth interpretation makes it refer to the Messiah. COME HITHER: approach to royal state. AND EAT OF THE BREAD refers to the bread of royalty; AND DIP THY MORSEL IN THE VINEGAR refers to his sufferings, as it is said, BUT HE WAS WOUNDED BECAUSE OF OUR TRANSGRESSIONS (Isa. liii, 5).”⁹

The Targum of Jonathan to Isaiah 52:13 reads: “Behold, My servant the Messiah shall prosper; he shall be exalted and great and very powerful.”¹⁰

Furthermore, the same Targum to Isaiah 53:10 gives this interpretation: “It is the will of the Lord to purify and to acquit as innocent the remnant of His people, to cleanse their souls of sin, so that they may see the kingdom of their Messiah, have many sons and daughters, enjoy long life, and observe the Torah of the Lord, prospering according to His will.”¹¹

Isaiah 53:12 was applied to the Messiah as follows: “In this world, when Israel ate the Paschal lamb in Egypt, they did so in haste, as it is said: *And thus shall ye eat it*, etc. (Ex. XII, 11), *For in haste didst thou come forth out of the land of Egypt* (Deut. XVI, 3), but in the Messianic era, we are told: *For ye shall not*

go out in haste, neither shall ye go by flight (Isa. LII, 12).”¹²

On the following pages we present the entire Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:1-12, as found in Alexander Harkavy’s translation. To show that the view which teaches that the people of Israel are the suffering servant of God in that prophecy “is not admissible,” as *The Jewish Encyclopedia* has pointed out, we have placed the words “Israelites” and “Israelites’” in brackets after the terms “we,” “us,” and “our,” and the words “the Suffering Servant” and “the Suffering Servant’s” in brackets after the terms “he,” “him,” and “his,” in the English text.

The sacrificial sufferings and death of Israel’s Messiah were endured by him for penitent Gentile sinners as well as for the repentant Israelites. The Lord made this very clear when he said to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that the blessings bestowed upon Israel were to be shared also by “all the families of the earth.”¹³

Please read this prophecy of Isaiah sincerely, carefully, and prayerfully.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 7, p. 501, art. “Messiah.”
2. BT *Sukkah* 52a, (p. 246, Soncino ed.).
3. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 8, p. 512, art. “Messiah.”
4. BT *Sanhedrin* 98a, (pp. 663, 664, Soncino ed.).
5. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 6, p. 640, art. “Isaiah, Book of.”
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 204, art. “Servant of God.”
8. BT *Sanhedrin* 98b, p. 608.
9. *Midrash Rabbah* on Ruth, chap. 5, sect. 6 (p. 64, Soncino ed.).
10. Samson H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation*, p. 63. See also J.F. Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah*, p. 178.
11. Levey, *op. cit.*, p. 65; Stenning, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
12. *Midrash Rabbah* to Exodus, chap. 19, sect. 6 (p. 237, Soncino ed.).
13. Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 26:4; 28:14. See also 1 Kings 8:41-43; 1 Chronicles 6:32-33.

THE SUFFERING SERVANT

As Foretold in Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12

52:13. Behold, my [Suffering] servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14. As many were astonished at thee; his [the Suffering Servant's] visage was so marred more than any man, and his [the Suffering Servant's] form more than the sons of men:

15. So shall he [the Suffering Servant] sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him [the Suffering Servant]: for that which had not been told them [the Israelites] shall they see; and that which they [the Israelites] had not heard shall they [the Israelites] consider.

53:1. Who would have believed our [the Israelites'] report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

2. For he [the Suffering Servant] grew up before Him [the Lord] as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he [the Suffering Servant] had no form nor comeliness; and when we [the Israelites] see him [the Suffering Servant], there is no beauty that we [the Israelites] should desire him [the Suffering Servant].

3. He [the Suffering Servant] was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he [the Suffering Servant] was despised, and we [the Israelites] esteemed him [the Suffering Servant] not.

4. Surely he [the Suffering Servant] hath borne griefs inflicted by us [the Israelites], and suffered sorrows we [the Israelites] have caused: yet we [the Israelites] did esteem him [the Suffering Servant] stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5. But he [the Suffering Servant] was wounded through our

[the Israelites'] transgressions, bruised through our [the Israelites'] iniquities: the chastisement of our [the Israelites'] peace was upon him [the Suffering Servant], and with his [the Suffering Servant's] wounds we [the Israelites] were healed.

6. All we [the Israelites] like sheep have gone astray; we [the Israelites] have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath caused the iniquity of us [the Israelites] all to fall upon him [the Suffering Servant].

7. He [the Suffering Servant] was oppressed, and he [the Suffering Servant] was afflicted, yet he [the Suffering Servant] opened not his [the Suffering Servant's] mouth: as a lamb which is brought to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he [the Suffering Servant] opened not his [the Suffering Servant's] mouth.

8. He [the Suffering Servant] was taken away from rule and from judgment; and his [the Suffering Servant's] life who shall recount? for he [the Suffering Servant] was cut off out of the land of the living; through the transgressions of my people [Israel] was he [the Suffering Servant] stricken.

9. And one made his [the Suffering Servant's] grave among the wicked, and his [the Suffering Servant's] tomb among the rich; although he [the Suffering Servant] had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his [the Suffering Servant's] mouth.

10. But it pleased the Lord to bruise him [the Suffering Servant]; he hath put him [the Suffering Servant] to grief; if his [the Suffering Servant's] soul shall consider it a recompense for guilt, he [the Suffering Servant] shall see his [the Suffering Servant's] seed, He [the Lord] shall prolong his [the Suffering Servant's] days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his [the Suffering Servant's] hands.

11. He [the Suffering Servant] shall see of the travail of his [the Suffering Servant's] soul, and shall be satisfied: by his [the Suffering Servant's] knowledge shall my servant justify the righteous before many, and he [the Suffering Servant] shall bear their iniquities.

12. Therefore will I divide him [the Suffering Servant] a portion with the great, and he [the Suffering Servant] shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he [the Suffering Servant] had laid open his [the Suffering Servant's] soul unto death, and was numbered with transgressors; and he [the Suffering Servant] took off the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.—Alexander Harkavy's translation.



MESSIAH AS KING

FROM THE third (possibly the last half of the second) century C.E. down to the seventeenth the concept of two separate and distinct Messiahs became popular and widespread in Judaism. Bizarre as it may seem today, it was taught by some of Israel's religious leaders that *prior* to the appearing of King Messiah ben David (of the lineage of Judah) to reign over God's people, there would appear a warrior Messiah ben Joseph (through the lineage of Ephraim) to fight and die in battle with Gog and Magog, to deliver God's people from political subjection to other nations.

During the long period from 218 B.C.E. to 135 C.E., when the Jews lived under Greek and Roman domination, they were plagued by oppression, stirred to revolt, and were often butchered by the sword.

"They yearned for the promised deliverer of the house of David, who would free them from the yoke of the hated foreign usurper, would put an end to the impious Roman rule, and would establish his own reign of peace and justice in its place."

That was especially so from 66 to 135 C.E., when the land of Israel went through its two greatest blood baths. The first, the revolt that began against Rome in 66 C.E., culminated in 70 C.E. with the demolition of Jerusalem and its Temple, besides untold suffering and enormous slaughter of its inhabitants. The second rebellion against Rome, in 132 C.E., was climaxed in 135 C.E. by another destruction of Jerusalem, with perhaps even worse consequences for the Jewish people. There was then no Temple for the Romans to destroy, but Emperor Hadrian, by decrees invoking the death penalty for

violating them, outlawed the religious observances of Judaism throughout the empire.

Simeon bar Kochba had proclaimed himself Israel's long-awaited royal Messiah and ruling prince. His false messianic claim was unwisely endorsed by Rabbi Akiba, the leading Jewish teacher of that time. Many of the people of the land followed Bar Kochba as such and supported him valiantly and vigorously in his revolt against the mighty power of Rome for three years. These facts constitute irrefutable evidence that an erroneous and widespread concept of the Messiah as a political deliverer and warrior had become dominant in the thinking of the majority of Israel's religious leaders at that time. The writings of the Talmudic sages and others show that such was the case.

This is no surprise, for the writings of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets of the Lord clearly reveal that in their time politics had become an obsession with many of the false prophets and even some of the priests from the death of King Josiah onward. The historical accounts of the books of the Maccabees and of Josephus show that political salvation became more and more uppermost in the thinking of many of the religious leaders as time rolled by.

Dr. Joseph Klausner, who has made a comprehensive study of the subject of the concept of a Messiah ben Joseph in the Judaism of the first centuries C.E., has well said: "It seems to me that the idea of a twofold Messiah inevitably arose from the conception of the *twofold* character of the essentially single Messiah."²

And he asks: "*How* did the idea of a twofold Messiah arise; and *why* is the second Messiah called 'son of Joseph'?"³

He seems to provide the answer to his own query by tersely saying; "Near at hand lay this idea: The *twofold character* of the Messiah should be transformed into a *twofold Messiah*. And this was achieved by transferring to a second Messiah the function of waging war in its entirety."⁴

What does this mean? Simply this, that in the Holy Scriptures the God of Israel has promised His people but *one* Messiah whose mission is *twofold*. Dr. Klausner is right in saying that the correct concept anciently held in Bible times was that of “the twofold character of the essentially single Messiah.”

Thus far we have been studying what God has said in the Holy Scriptures about the time of the advent of Israel’s promised Messiah as God’s suffering servant in behalf of sinful humanity. As the Suffering Messiah he was “cut off”—put to death—in the spring of 31 C.E., in the midst (middle) of the 70th week of years, as foretold in Daniel 9: 24-27. He did not attempt to reign as Israel’s king at that time. Daniel 9:24-27 does not speak of him as coming to be Israel’s King Messiah *then*. His advent to reign as King of kings is still future.

The Book of Daniel clearly reveals that the kingdom of God upon earth will not become a reality until after the rise and fall of four universal kingdoms (Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome), and not until after the division of the fourth kingdom into smaller ones, as foretold in Daniel 2:41-44. There the kingdom of the Messiah is represented as a stone cut out of a mountain without hands. Verses 34, 45. It will destroy all the kingdoms of the earth at that time, and “it shall stand for ever.” Verse 44. No specific date is given for that final event. However, we have been living in the time of the divided world depicted in these verses for many years, which means that we are now living in the time of the end, and that ere long God will interpose to destroy the existing kingdoms of earth and set up His own, which will “stand for ever.”

Likewise in Daniel 7 the four great universal empires are represented by four symbolic beasts—Babylon, the winged lion (605-539 B.C.E.); Persia, the voracious bear (539-331 B.C.E.); Greece, a four-headed leopard (331-168 B.C.E.); and Rome, a terrible monster (168 B.C.E.-476 C.E.). The ten horns of the fourth symbolic beast represent the several nations into

which the Roman Empire was divided after its collapse in 476 C.E. and down to the present time. Daniel 7:3-7. It is clearly shown in chapter 7 that in the latter time of the nations into which the fourth great empire (Rome) would be divided the Messiah's kingdom would be set up. Daniel said:

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the Ancient of days, and he was brought near before Him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Daniel 7:13, 14.

"And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them." Verse 27.

Thus it is made very clear that the advent of the Messiah as King of kings and Lord of lords is still future. This is what we can properly call the Messiah's second advent. His *first advent* was that of the Suffering Messiah, to be "cut off" to atone for the sins of his truly penitent people; and his *second* will be that of his coming in glory to reign as the royal Messiah, and to destroy all the impenitent who persist in sin.

There is not in the Holy Scriptures the slightest indication that the royal Messiah who is yet to come will be another person, different and distinct from the one who, as the Suffering Messiah, was "cut off" by death in behalf of his penitent people in 31 C.E., as foretold in Daniel 9:24-27.

Although many signs have been given whereby we may know that the Messiah's second advent is near, there is no divine revelation of the exact date when that grand and glorious event will take place. But signs showing that the advent of the royal Messiah is nearer than ever are abundant.

We ought to be spiritually prepared and ready to receive him as our King and enjoy everlasting citizenship in his glorious kingdom.

The only safe course for each of us to follow now is to repent of our sins and by the grace of God to live every day as if it were our last, so that, whether alive or dead, we will be ready to receive him when he comes in glory to reign as King of kings.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 8, p. 508, col. 1, art. "Messiah."
2. Dr. Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, p. 493.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 492.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 495.



AUTUMN TO AUTUMN

THE ANCIENT Hebrew people employed two kinds of years: (1) The liturgical year, by which the religious festivals of ancient Israel were regulated, began with the first day of the spring month Abib, which they later called Nisan, (Xanthicus in Greek);¹ (2) The civil or economic year, by which the sabbatical and the jubilee years were regulated, began in the autumn on the first day of the seventh month, which was called Tishri. This *civil year*, reckoned from autumn to autumn, is the one under consideration in this study.

The first day of the seventh month, Tishri, was, therefore, to be religiously observed by the people as a sacred, annual day of rest and a holy convocation. The Mosaic law concerning it is recorded in Leviticus 23:24, 25 and Numbers 29:1.

A modern Jewish reference work has referred to that particular day of the year as "a memorial of blowing of trumpets," and comments: "The first day of the seventh month, a holy convocation with cessation of hard labor and prescribed fire-offerings."²

The Holy Scriptures tell of an enthusiastic celebration of the first day of the seventh month at Jerusalem as the Feast of Trumpets under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah in the reign of Artaxerxes I. Nehemiah 8:1-13.

The seventh month is not called Tishri in the Hebrew text of the Holy Scriptures. A widely used Jewish reference work aptly remarks:

"From the first Babylonian exile the Jews adopted the Babylonian names of the months."³

After the Jewish people came under the dominion of the Greeks Tishri was given a Greek name. The Jewish historian

Josephus has put it on record in the first century C.E. saying: "The seventh month that they came together, which month is called Thisri by the natives and Hyperberetaios by the Macedonians," etc.⁴

In an editorial footnote to a statement of Josephus concerning the month Tishri this explanation is given: "In Hebrew terminology, on the 1st of *Tishri*, otherwise Rosh Ha-shanah ('head of the year'), the autumnal New Year's Day (September-October) or 'F. of Trumpets.'"⁵

In contradistinction to the liturgical New Year's Day, which was Abib (Nisan) 1 in springtime, Tishri 1, as the civil or economic New Year's Day was celebrated in the autumn of the year. Hence we are told:

"In the earliest times the Hebrew year began in autumn with the opening of the economic year."⁶

In reference to the first day of the autumnal month Tishri, mention is made of "the *shofar* [trumpet] [blown] on New Year."⁷ In the Jewish civil calendar it was "the first day of Tishri, New Year's Day."⁸

In its listing of the Jewish festival days and fasts, a widely used Jewish reference work lists this date: "Tishri 1. New Year, first day."⁹

Another scholarly reference work says: "The first of Tishri is the New Year for the civil calendar (including the counting of the reigns of foreign kings; see RH 3a-b and cf. Git. 8:5) for the Sabbatical and Jubilee years."¹⁰

The present use of the calendar year beginning with Tishri 1 as the civil New Year's Day has long been widespread among Jews, even more so today because it has been nearly 19 centuries since the people of Israel had at Jerusalem a temple, a priesthood, and the offering of animal sacrifices as a part of their religious services. This can be seen by examining a modern Jewish calendar.

"The new Jewish calendar seems to have been inaugurated in 363 (Tishri)."¹¹

Tishri 1 has played a very important part in Jewish chronology, which we must keep in mind in considering the regnal years of Artaxerxes I as king of Persia, under whose jurisdiction Ezra and Nehemiah served as leaders in the restoration of Jerusalem and the provincial government of Israel in the 5th century B.C.E.

For example, there is in the Babylonian Talmud a rabbinical tractate called '*Abodah Zarah*, which title means "strange worship."¹² In chapter 1 of that tractate we read:

"MISHNAH. These are the festivities of the idolaters: Kalenda, Saturnalia, Kratesis, the anniversary of accession to the throne as well as [royal] birthdays and anniversaries of deaths."¹³

Note that the Mishnah declares that "the anniversary of accession to the throne" was a festivity of the idolaters. This legal ban might appear to pose a serious problem for some devout Jews insofar as the dating of a document is concerned. For example, in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah the authors give such dates as "the first year of Cyrus king of Persia" (Ezra 1:1; 6:3), "the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king" (6:15), "the seventh year of Artaxerxes" (7:7, 8), "the twentieth year of Artaxerxes" (Neh. 1:1; 2:1), and "in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes" (13:6).

In the Gemara (later discussion) relating to that Mishnah (rabbinical law) in the Talmudic tractate '*Abodah Zarah* there is an interesting rabbinical discussion of questions asked. For example:

"To the question 'The reign of kings', what is the practical object of this law? R. Hisda replied: [It affects] the dating of documents. Now, the same Mishnah says, 'The first of Tishri is New Year for [counting] years and sabbatical cycles' and when it was asked: 'What practical significance has this ruling?' R. Hisda [again] replied: [It affects the dating of] documents. [The question was then raised:] Is not this rule of dating documents self-contradictory? And the answer given

was: 'The one refers to Jewish kings, the other to kings of Gentile nations—the year of Gentile kings being counted from Tishri, and of Jewish kings from Nisan.'"¹⁴

Note particularly that by the Jewish rabbis of long ago the regnal years "of Gentile kings" were "counted from Tishri" to Tishri. The same thing is taught in the Talmudic tractate *Rosh Hashana*:

"MISHNAH. There are four new years. On the first of Nisan is new year for kings and for festivals. On the first of Elul is new year for the tithe of cattle. R. Eleazar and R. Si-meon, however, place this on the first of Tishri. On the first of Tishri is new year for years, for release and jubilee years, for plantation and for [tithe of] vegetables."¹⁵

Concerning the statement that says, "On the first of Nisan is new year for kings," editorial footnote no. 3 to that part of the Mishnah says: "The Gemara discusses what kinds of kings are meant—whether Israelitish or other."¹⁶

R. Hisda, already mentioned above in the quotation from the Talmudic tractate *'Abodah Zarah*, said also in the Gemara of *Rosh Hashanah*:

"On the first of Nisan is New Year for kings, and we asked, What is the legal bearing of this, and R. Hisda replied, For [determining the validity of] documents?—There is no contradiction; the one statement refers to kings of Israel, the other to kings of other nations. What then of the dictum of R. Hisda, 'This statement refers only to the kings of Israel, but for the kings of other nations we reckon from Tishri.'"¹⁷

That makes it quite clear that the dating of the reigns of Gentile kings by the ancient rabbis was not the same as that for the dating of the reigns of Jewish kings. This, in turn, raised for us this question: How does it affect their dating of the years of the reign of Artaxerxes I in the Biblical documents?

A widely used Jewish reference work says concerning the first day of Tishri, the seventh calendar month counting from the first month Abib (in Hebrew) or Nisan (in Aramaic):¹⁸

“This day was not expressly called New-Year’s Day, but it was evidently so regarded by the Jews at a very early period (see R. H. 1.1).”¹⁹

In the story about the Flood that deluged the earth in the time of the patriarch Noah we are told: “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.” Genesis 7:11.

This is the earliest recorded instance of dating by the month and day of the month in the Holy Scriptures. The question posed here is, What month? Since there is not the slightest intimation that the reference is to a religious festival, we must assume that the calendar date is a civil one and not a liturgical one. No monthly religious festival is mentioned in the Book of Genesis. The Targum of Palestine to that passage of Genesis says:

“In the six-hundredth year of the life of Noah, in the second month, which was the month of Marchesvan, for hitherto the months had been numbered from Tishri which was the beginning of the year at the completion of the world, in the seventeenth day of the month, in that day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up.”²⁰

Josephus, the Jewish historian, wrote: “This catastrophe [the Flood] happened in the six hundredth year of Noah’s rulership, in what was once the second month, called by the Macedonians Dius and by the Hebrews Marsuan, according to the arrangement of the calendar which they followed in Egypt.”²¹ The editorial footnote to the word “Marsuan” says: “Heb. Marcheshwan (= October-November).”²² Josephus, writing in Greek, apparently attempted to transliterate the Hebrew month name Marheshwan in this instance.

In a rabbinical treatise said to have been penned about 16 centuries ago we have a comprehensive and instructive view of the calendrical data set forth in the Biblical story of the Flood:

“The judgment of the generation of the Flood lasted twelve months. How is this deduced? (i) *In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month...the windows of heaven were opened* (Gen. VII, 11); and it is written, (ii) *And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights* (ib. 12): this embraces the rest of Marheshwan and Kislew; (iii) *And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days* (ib. 24): this covers Tebeth, Shebat, Adar, Nisan, and Iyar; (iv) *And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day, upon the mountains of Ararat* (ib. VIII, 4): that means Siwan, the seventh month from the descent of the rain. For sixteen days the water diminished at the rate of a cubit per four days, which is one and a half handbreadths per day. You may thus infer that the Ark was eleven cubits in the water, and it all drained off in sixty days. Thus you read, *And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month* (ib. 5): that is Ab, the tenth from the descent of the rain. Another interpretation: (v) *And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month [i.e. Tishri], on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth* (ib. VIII, 13): it became a marsh. (vi) *And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dry* (ib. VIII, 14): it became like parched soil, which they sowed, but nothing would grow.”²³

Thus the lunar calendar used by the people of God during the patriarchal period and prior to Israel’s exodus from Egypt was the civil calendar, which began with Tishri as its first month and extended from autumn to autumn of each calendar year.

A widely used Jewish reference work has expertly stated:

“In the earliest times the Hebrew year began in autumn with the opening of the economic year. There followed in regular succession the seasons of seed-sowing, growth and ripening of the corn under the influence of the former and the latter rains, harvest and ingathering of the fruits. In harmony with

this was the order of the great agricultural festivals, according to the oldest legislation, namely, the feast of unleavened bread at the beginning of the barley harvest, in the month of Abib; the feast of harvest, seven weeks later; and the feast of ingathering at the going out or turn of the year...

"This system of dating the New-Year is that which was adopted by the Semites generally, while other peoples, as the Greeks and Persians, began the year in spring, both methods of reckoning being primarily agricultural and based on the seasons of seed-time and harvest.

"The regnal year was evidently reckoned in the same way as late as the end of the seventh century B.C. This is evident from the account of the eighteenth year of King Josiah, in which only by such a reckoning can sufficient time be allowed for the events of that year which precede the celebration of the Passover, assuming, of course, that the Passover was celebrated at the usual time in the spring (II Kings xxii. 3, xxiii. 21-23). Only in the same way can the fourth year of Jehoiakim be made to synchronize with the twenty-first year of Nabopolassar, in which the battle of Carchemish was fought, and also with the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian year having been reckoned from the spring (Jer. xxv. 1, xlv. 2). The second half of the Hebrew year would thus correspond to the first half of the Babylonian year. In Ezek. xl. 1 the prophet has his vision at the beginning of the year, apparently in the month of Tishri. The Levitical law places the beginning of the Sabbatical year in the autumn, on the tenth day of the seventh month, according to the later reckoning (Lev. xxv. 9). It has been pointed out also that the story of the Flood places the beginning of the deluge on the seventeenth day of the second month, which would, on an autumn reckoning, coincide with the beginning of the rainy season."²⁴

The adoption of the liturgical calendar year, extending from Abib (Nisan) 1 to the end of Adar, by Israel at the time of their exodus from Egypt did not displace the use of the lunar

civil or economic calendar year extending from Tishri 1 to the end of Ellul. The liturgical calendar year began in the spring and the civil year began in the autumn, but the days of the month in both calendars were the same.

“The idea developed also in Jewish circles that on the first of Tishri, the sacred New Year’s Day and the anniversary of Creation, man’s doings were judged and his destiny was decided.”²⁵

“R. Eliezer says: In Tishri the world was created.”²⁶

“On the first of Tishri is new year for years.”²⁷

Tishri 1, called Rosh Hashanah, was one and the same day of the year in both systems of calendation.

Concerning the Talmudic tractate Rosh Hashanah, we are told: “It contains (1) the most important rules concerning the calendar year,” etc. ²⁸

“The old numerical Mishnah commences with an account of the four beginnings of the religious and the civil year;” etc. ²⁹

The words “Rosh Hashanah” used in Jewish literature mean “New Year.” The same reference work confirms this: “The first of Tishri becomes the ‘Rosh ha-Shanah.’”³⁰

In the scholarly “Introduction” to his translation of the tractate *Rosh Hashanah* into English, as published in the Soncino edition of the Babylonian Talmud, Maurice Simon, M.A., explains:

“New Year falls on a New Moon—the first of Tishri. In Scripture this holy day is designated ‘day of memorial of blowing the trumpet’ or ‘day of blowing the trumpet’, but by the time of the Rabbis popular usage had substituted for this the designation ‘New Year’”³¹

Israel’s first liturgical calendar year began at the time of the exodus from Egypt in the first month which they called Abib. Exodus 12:2; 13:4. This was primarily for regulating the celebration of their religious festivals thereafter, as can be seen in Leviticus 23:4-37; Numbers 28 and 29 of the Mosaic law.

Abib was the Hebrew name of the spring month in which barley and flax were ready to harvest. Exodus 9:31; Joshua 2:6. Also it was the month when the River Jordan overflowed its banks every year because of the latter rains and the melting snow on the mountains of Lebanon in springtime. Joshua 3:16.³² We read, too, that some of King David's soldiers "went over Jordan in the first month when it had overflowed all his banks." 1 Chronicles 12:15.

We do not know how long it was after the exodus that the first day of the seventh month Tishri was reckoned by Jews as the beginning of the regnal years of Gentile kings.

We have noted above that Israel's rabbis of the Talmudic period had two methods of dating the reigns of ancient kings. The regnal years of the kings of Judah were reckoned from the first day of the first calendar month (in the spring) called Nisan in Aramaic; but the regnal years of the Gentile kings were reckoned by Jews from the first day of the seventh month (in the autumn) which they called Tishri in Aramaic, the official language widely used throughout the Babylonian Empire. R. Hisda taught and defended that practice, as recorded in *'Abodah Zarah* 10a, as we have already noted.

In the tractate *Rosh Hashanah* of the same Talmud we find him mentioned and quoted again in this interesting rabbinical report:

"R. Hisda said: The rule [that New Year for kings is in Nisan] was only meant to apply to the kings of Israel, but the years of non-Israelitish kings are reckoned from Tishri, as it says, *The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. Now it came to pass in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year* etc., and it is written further, *And it came to pass in the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes*. Now since when speaking of Kislev he places it in the twentieth year and when speaking of Nisan he places it also in the twentieth, we may conclude that New Year is not in Nisan. [This, however, is not conclusive]. In the latter text, it is true, it is expressly stated

that [it was the twentieth year] of Artaxerxes, but in the former how do we know that the reign of Artaxerxes is referred to? Perhaps some other system of dating is adopted?—R. Papa replied: The occurrence in each text of the expression '*twentieth year*' provides us with a *gezerah shawah* [indicating that] just as in the latter case it means '*of the reign of Artaxerxes*,' so in the former.'"³³

R. Hisda was a remarkable religious teacher. He is cited or mentioned more than 750 times in the Babylonian Talmud. In the *Rabbinical Index* to the entire Babylonian Talmud the references to him occupy $2\frac{2}{3}$ columns.³⁴ He is said to have been of a priestly family and to have studied under Rab (Abba Arika). He was a Jewish amora ("speaker" or "interpreter") of the third generation in Babylonia. He died at the age of 92 in 308 or 309 C.E. We are told that after the death of R. Judah haNasi, R. Hisda presided over the rabbinical school at Sura, near the Euphrates River in Babylon, for 10 years.³⁵

We have already noted that in the Babylonian Talmud the rabbis made a clear distinction between their dating of the reigns of the Jewish and the Gentile kings. The dating of the reigns of the kings of Judah was to be from the first day of Nisan in the spring, while the dating of the reigns of Gentile kings was to be from the first day of Tishri in the autumn.

It is obvious, from the information provided by the Babylonian Talmud concerning that practice, that this distinction began earlier than the period of the Gemara. The question now is: How much earlier? It did not originate with R. Hisda, for his views belong to the period of the Gemara. It is said concerning his predecessor, R. Judah ha-Nasi (c. 135-c. 220 C.E.):

"Both the Talmuds assume as a matter of course that Judah is the originator of the Mishnah—'our Mishnah,' as it was called in Babylon—and the author of the explanations and discussions relating to its sentences. However, the Mishnah, like all the other literary documents of Jewish tradition, can

not be ascribed to any one author in the general acceptance of that term; hence Judah is correctly called its redactor, and not its author.’”³⁶

Thus it is quite evident that the view that Jews should date the regnal years of Gentile kings from autumn to autumn was held and taught *prior to* the redaction of the Mishnah and the Gemara.

So R. Hisda has correctly shown from Holy Writ that the regnal years of King Artaxerxes I were reckoned by Jews as beginning in the autumn. More than 600 years *before* the Talmudic writings existed, Nehemiah wrote:

“The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.” Nehemiah 1:1, 2.

“And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.” Nehemiah 2:1.

Note that in *both* of these instances the reference is to “the twentieth year” of King Artaxerxes. These passages of Holy Writ clearly show that the month Chisleu (the ninth month) preceded the month Nisan (the first month) in the 20th *regnal year* of Artaxerxes I (444-443 B.C.E.).

In agreement with this view, Dr. E. R. Thiele says:

“Nehemiah, and probably his contemporary Ezra, used a Tishri-to-Tishri reckoning even when speaking of Persian kings, for Nehemiah speaks of being in the palace of Artaxerxes in the month Kislev of the twentieth year of the king, but he also speaks of the following Nisan as in the same twentieth year (Neh. 1:1; 2:1).”³⁷

From Chisleu 1, when Nehemiah heard the report about the deplorable conditions in Jerusalem until he made his

request to the king of Persia in Nisan 1 there was an interval of four months; and from Nisan 1 to Chisleu 1 there was an interval of eight months, which make a total of 12 months. It is obvious, therefore, that the regnal years of Artaxerxes I were reckoned by the writer of the Book of Nehemiah as beginning in the autumn.

For the faithful believer in the Holy Scriptures which God has given us, the testimony of the divinely inspired writer should be decisive, for "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Timothy 3:16. Furthermore, Nehemiah was personally acquainted with, and trusted by, King Artaxerxes I, and he was there when this historic event occurred.

A modern Jewish scholar has well said: "*Chislev*. The third month, reckoning from Tishri, the ninth month from Nisan. That Nehemiah regarded Tishri as the first month may be inferred from a comparison with ii. 1 where he speaks of Nisan as still being in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. If the year began in Nisan, the date in ii. 1 would be the twenty-first year of the reign; otherwise the events there recorded would antedate those recounted in this chapter. Accordingly, Nehemiah was acquainted with the practice of reckoning the year from Tishri.'" 38

Why was there a period of four months from the time when Nehemiah heard the report of the deplorable state of affairs in Judea until he spoke to King Artaxerxes I about it? Another modern writer has aptly commented:

"Four months Nehemiah waited for a favorable opportunity to present his request to the king." 39

In his narrative concerning the period when he was governor of Judea Nehemiah wrote: "From the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor." Nehemiah 5:14.

Also: "In all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two

and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king." Nehemiah 13:6.

That regnal year 32 of Artaxerxes I as king *de facto* of Persia extended from the autumn of 432 to the autumn of 431 B. C. E. This fact is especially interesting because it was in that particular year on August 3, 431 B. C. E. that the sun was eclipsed, as mentioned by Thucydides⁴⁰ in connection with the first year of the Peloponnesian War. Thus this regnal year 32 of Artaxerxes I is chronologically fixed by this solar eclipse which occurred shortly before his regnal year 32 ended.

In the light of the facts presented above, it appears certain that the regnal years of Artaxerxes I, king of Persia, have been correctly reckoned by many Jewish and Gentile scholars as extending, *not* from midsummer to midsummer, as the Greeks did in their use of the Olympiad years from chronological purposes, but from autumn to autumn.

So it is important that we keep in mind the difference between the method used by ancient Jews in dating the regnal years of Gentile kings and that which they used to date the reigns of Hebrew monarchs. This explains why Jews have reckoned the B.C.E. dates of the regnal years 7, 20, and 32 of Artaxerxes I, as they are recorded in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, from autumn to autumn.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Josephus, *Antiq.*, bk. 2, chap. 14, sect. 6 (HUP vol. 4, p. 301).
2. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, p. 374, col. 2, art. "Festivals."
3. *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 671, art. "Month."
4. Josephus, *Antiq.*, bk. 8, chap. 4, sect. 1 (HUP vol. 5, pp. 625, 627). See also bk. 3, chap. 10, sect. 2 (HUP vol. 4, p. 431); bk. 8, chap. 13, sect. 2 (HUP vol. 5, p. 747); bk. 12, chap. 3, sect. 3 (HUP vol. 7, p. 75); *War*, bk. 2, chap. 19, sect. 4 (HUP vol. 2, p. 527); bk. 4, chap. 1, sect. 9 (HUP vol. 3, p. 21).
5. *Ibid.*, *Antiq.*, bk. 3, chap. 10, sect. 2 (HUP vol. 4, p. 431. Footnote "e".) See also BT *Rosh Hashanah*, "Introduction," p. xi.
6. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, p. 254, col. 1, art. "New-Year."
7. BT *Shabbath* 16a, (p. 168, Soncino ed.).
8. *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana*, Pis. 23, p. 352.
9. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, p. 505, col. 2, art. "Calendar."

10. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 12, col. 1061, art. "New Year."
11. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, p. 65, col. 1, art. "Chronology." See also vol. 6, p. 400, art. "Hillel II."
12. BT *'Abodah Zarah*, "Introduction," p. xi.
13. *Ibid.*, chap. 1, 8a, (p. 36, Soncino ed.).
14. *Ibid.*, 10a (p. 49).
15. BT *Rosh Hashanah*, chap. 1, (p. 1, Soncino ed.).
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, 8a (p. 30). See also: Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, pp. 90, 91.
18. For an excellent article concerning the Aramaic language, see *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, pp. 68-72.
19. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, p. 256, col. 1, art. "New-Year."
20. *Targum of Palestine* to Genesis 11.
21. Josephus, *Antiq.*, bk. 1, chap. 3, sect. 3 (HUP vol. 4, p. 37).
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis, chap. 33, sect. 7 (vol. 1, pp. 267, 268 Soncino ed.).
24. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, p. 254, art. "New-Year."
25. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 281, col. 2, art. "Atonement." This is an obvious reference to the Day of Atonement which fell on the tenth day of the seventh month of the liturgical calendar, which was Tishri, the first month of the civil calendar year.
26. BT *Rosh Hashanah*, 10b, p. 39; see also 27a, p. 123.
27. *Ibid.*, chap. 1, p. 1.
28. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, p. 483, col. 1, art. "Rosh Hashanah."
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 375, col. 1, art. "Festivals."
31. BT *Rosh Hashanah*, "Introduction," p. xi. See also Leviticus 23:24; Numbers 29:1.
32. See *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed.), vol. 15, p. 510, col. 1, art. "Jordanes;" *The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 328, art. "Jordan"; E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 483; *SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 599, col. 1, art. "Jordan."
33. BT *Rosh Hashanah* 3a-b, p. 7. Nehemiah 1:1; 2:1. In the "Glossary" to that tractate the words *gezerah shawah* are explained thus: "(Lit., 'equal cut'); the application to one subject of a rule already known to apply to another, on the strength of a common expression in connection with both in the Scriptures."—Page 185.
34. BT *Index Volume*, pp. 652, 653.
35. See *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, p. 29, art. "Abba Arika"; p. 528, art. "Amora"; vol. 2, p. 409, art. "Babylonia"; vol. 6, p. 422, art. "Hisda."
36. *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 335, art. "Judah I," col. 2.
37. E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, p. 157.
38. Judah J. Slotki, *Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah*, p. 182.
39. E. G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 630.
40. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, bk. 2, chap. 28.

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